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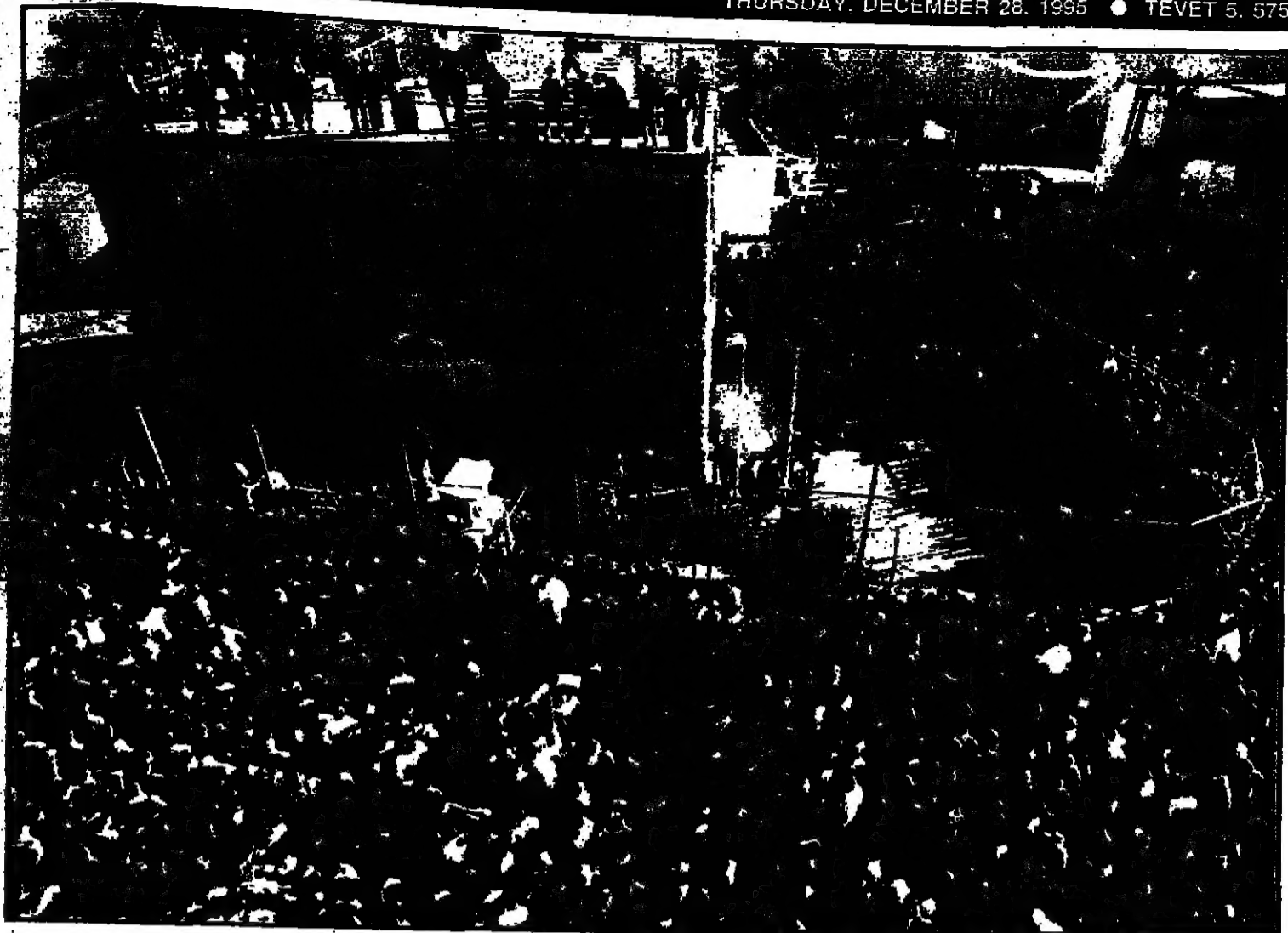
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VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19159

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1995 • TEVET 5, 5756 • SHAABAN 6, 1416

NIS 4.20 (EILAT NIS 3.60)



Ramallah residents celebrate around the town's former civil administration building after the IDF withdrew yesterday. (B. Hessler)

## 'Israel seeks \$12b. for Golan pullout'

ISRAELI-Syrian peace negotiations resumed here yesterday, amid cautious optimism that this round might prove more productive than those that preceded it six months ago.

Israel is seeking up to \$12 billion in US financial aid if it agrees to withdraw from the Golan Heights as part of a peace accord with Syria, Israel Television's Channel 1 reported last night.

The report, which cited unnamed Clinton administration sources, said Israel is asking for \$7b. to cover new security arrangements, including weaponry and ground-based and aerial surveillance equipment.

Israel also wants \$2b. for compensating the 13,000 Israelis who would probably have to leave their homes on the Golan, and up to \$3b. for water projects in the area, it said.

The report suggested the requests have already been made. No Israeli government confirmation was immediately available.

The report also said the Pentagon has compiled a list of military

HILLEL KUTTLER and agencies  
QUEENSTOWN, Maryland

supplies the US would provide Syria if a peace deal is reached.

The two delegations and an American team arrived at the Wye River Conference Center at midday for a series of informal discussions, beginning with lunch.

The limousines containing the Israeli and Syrian teams arrived at the site, 70 miles east of Washington, separately, each escorted by state police and US security vehicles.

Ten diplomats are participating in the talks: four Americans, three Israelis, and three Syrians. The delegations are led by US peace process coordinator Dennis Ross and the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors to the US, Itamar Rabinovich and Walid Mualeem.

The other Israeli negotiators are Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir, and ministry legal adviser Yoel Singer. The others in the Syrian team are Michael Wahbi, director of Foreign Minister Farouk Shara's office,

and Riad Daoudi, a legal adviser to the ministry.

The Israeli team includes two advisers who will not participate in the talks, but a senior American official said Damascus has sent no one but the three negotiators.

He discounted reports that Syria's delegation is a low-level one, unable to enter into a meaningful give-and-take.

"The issue is not rank, it's empowerment. And Walid [Mualeem] is one of the few people in Syria who has that," he said.

The official was guardedly optimistic about the newest attempt at prodding progress, saying, "We've been hearing positive things in the past month," but "I would caution you" not to look for progress right away.

Talks will take place over six of the next 10 days, with a break this weekend for the negotiators to return home for consultations.

The US official said the relaxed atmosphere at this 1,100-acre former plantation would lead itself to "free-flowing discussions" on all issues. The atmosphere of the talks is expected to be fostered by (Continued on Page 2)

## Amid cheers and stones, IDF pulls out of Ramallah

THE IDF pulled out of Ramallah-Al Bira yesterday in a convoy of Border Police jeeps, which some cheered on its way and others stoned, as a handful of Palestinian policemen tried to keep order.

Ramallah was expected to be more trouble-free, but the withdrawal to Beit El, two kilometers up the road, and the immediate entry of the Palestinian Police in mid-afternoon completed without serious incident the IDF's pre-election withdrawals from Palestinian population centers, which started with Jenin two months ago.

Yesterday's move was advanced a day following completion of the Ramallah bypass road, which enables settlers from Beit El, Paagot, and Ofra to travel to Jerusalem without going through Area A, Palestinian-controlled zones.

Ramallah Governor Mustafa Liftawi and West Bank police chief Gen. Haj Ismail Jibr entered the military headquarters 30 minutes after Israeli troops left.

JON IMMANUEL

Liftawi, identified with bombing attacks in Jerusalem in the late 1960s, said no Israeli should have any worries in the town.

Most Ramallah residents watched quietly from the sidewalks as the Israeli army moved out on their way out.

"I feel a little better, but not much," said Iyad Siyada, a stationery shop owner. "It's better than the occupation."

Ihsan Rukhab, co-proprietor of Rukhab's ice-cream parlor, explained that "There are a large number of intellectuals and educated people in this town. We don't get too excited."

But last night, fireworks lit the sky and people paraded in the streets.

Ramallah and nearby Bir Zeit University produced much of the political leadership, both for and against the peace process, during the intifada and the pre-Oslo talks in Washington from 1987-1993. These groups, committed

to democratic change, have largely been sidelined by the Oslo process and are critical of the outsiders from Tunis, whom they regard as less attentive to democratic rights than they would like.

The withdrawal leaves the Palestinian election campaign as the main focus of attention, and in Ramallah the campaign is likely to be fiercer than elsewhere. Samiha Khalil, of Al-Bira, is the only candidate running against Yasser Arafat for the presidency of the executive council to protest the Oslo accord.

The town is the center of the only real opposition party running, the People's Party, as well as of the Popular and Democratic Fronts which are boycotting the election, but not the campaign.

Arafat is scheduled to visit Ramallah on Monday. Yesterday, he thanked Israel for its "honest implementation" of the withdrawal agreement, saying Prime Minister Shimon Peres has shown serious commitment to the accord.

## Kahalani to Clinton: Don't force hasty peace

THIRD Way leader Avigdor Kahalani yesterday called on US President Bill Clinton not to press for a peace that, in the long term, would only encourage further wars against a weakened Israel.

In a fiery speech to more than 2,000 Golan Heights residents in Katzin last night, Kahalani also vowed to resign as deputy mayor of Tel Aviv to devote all his time and energy to the fight to keep the Golan under Israeli rule.

The plea to Clinton was contained in a letter to him.

"Numerous US generals and other security experts have said nothing can defend Israel in peace better than Israel's presence on the Golan," the letter reads.

DAVID RUDGE

"Your friend and our late prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, stated that it is inconceivable that even in peace we should leave the Golan, and whoever proposes doing so would abandon national security."

"We who have seen the ravages of war are deeply committed to the pursuit of a lasting peace. However, peace is only obtainable if Israel's security is not compromised."

"As president, you have shown a deep commitment not only to the peace process, but to the nation of Israel. For this, we are profoundly grateful and therefore we ask you not to press for a precipitous peace that in the

long run would only encourage further wars against a weakened Israel," the letter read.

The Third Way held an emergency council meeting on the Golan last night and vowed to do all in its power to support residents of the Heights in their fight for "peace with the Golan," and against the destruction of their communities.

Golan Residents Committee members stressed that the battle to achieve peace with the Golan is now beginning in earnest and a wide range of activities is planned, including a demonstration today opposite the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv.

Leaders of the National Religious Party (Continued on Page 2)

## IDF recalls booklet slurring PA Police

THE IDF yesterday began recalling a pamphlet it had distributed to soldiers, which characterizes Palestinian policemen as, among other things, "trigger happy," "illiterate," and "open to extortion."

OC Judea and Samaria Maj.-Gen. Gabi Ofir said the 25-page booklet - nine pages of which were leaked to the press - was written during a particularly difficult time in Gaza between 10 months to a year ago.

"I stress that the document was written on the basis of impressions, and was not an empirical study," Ofir told Israel Radio. Now, he said, the document is "null and void."

"The situation of relations today with the Palestinian Police and IDF soldiers is completely

HERB KEINON

different than what was described in the document," he said. "In light of the headlines ... orders will be given to collect the documents, because they are not relevant to today's reality or that of the past two months."

The booklet includes recommendations to soldiers and officers on how to deal with their Palestinian counterparts, as well as soldiers' impressions of Palestinian policemen they have met.

In a section entitled "General Recommendations to Officers," the pamphlet includes the following suggestions:

- "The slogan should be, 'Be smart, not right'."

- "It is important to collect pictures of wanted terrorists as soon as the [Oslo] agreement is signed - yesterday's wanted terrorist could be conducting negotiations with you tomorrow."

In a section called "Who is the Palestinian Policeman?" the document reads in part:

- "They are not versed in the agreement. For instance, they can argue for hours about a clause in the agreement, even though they never read it (and some of them are illiterate)."

- "They don't know the territory they are operating in."

- "They have difficulty communicating with Israelis (they don't speak English)."

- "There is a connection between the standard of the policeman and his native country: forces from Tunisia, Algeria, and Yemen are on a higher level than forces from Egypt."

- "There is a lack of personal discipline. They are capable of leaving a joint patrol to make a family visit."

- "They don't know how to read a map - it is possible to take

advantage of this by manipulating their officers at the time of an argument about the location of a roadblock."

In another section the document states: "The Israeli soldier is worried about being hit by a stray bullet fired from a Palestinian policeman (who is used to walking with the gun loaded as a sign of his masculinity)."

According to the section on the Palestinian policeman's character and mentality, they are "trigger happy," "have a short memory," and "they still see us as a threat and [as] the enemy."

As far as the Palestinian officers are concerned, "The senior officers do not take responsibility - only Arafat makes decisions."

The officers' hours "are different than ours. For example, you cannot meet with them in the early hours of the morning. If there is an incident, you have to push the officer out of bed to go to the scene."

The document also says Palestinian officers "present themselves as hardship cases for extortion."

In response, Arafat adviser Ahmed Tibi told Israel Radio it is a pity a body like the IDF uses "stereotypical expressions" against the Palestinian Police.

Tibi said he hopes the army initiates an up-to-date publication to reflect the "good mutual relations between the army and the police today."

Abaron Domb, spokesman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, said the document "reveals what IDF officers and many civilians know ... Can we live with a situation where these police, who are 'trigger happy,' without discipline, and who point their guns as an 'expression of masculinity,' are our partners in peace?"

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# Fate of 24 criminals in Hebron jail will be discussed with PA

ISRAEL should negotiate with the Palestinian Authority on what to do with 24 non-security prisoners in the Hebron jail after the IDF leaves the city, Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered yesterday.

The prisoners are suspected or convicted murderers, whose cases were (or are being) heard in civilian courts in the territories.

By law, since they are ordinary criminals rather than terrorists, they cannot be transferred to jails within the Green Line.

Israel would therefore like the

EVELYN GORDON

PA to take responsibility for them.

Peres told Justice Minister David Liba'i to raise this issue when he meets with PA Justice Minister Freith Abu Medein today.

Liba'i will also discuss with Abu Medein what to do about the 20 women security prisoners who refused to accept release to protest President Ezer Weizman's refusal to pardon five women involved in terrorist murders.

Liba'i and Environment Minis-

ter Yossi Sarid, the Ministerial Committee on Prisoner Releases, agreed with Peres that under no circumstance would the problem be solved by releasing the five unpardoned women.

They also agreed to begin examining the files of the remaining 1,100 security prisoners, to determine which prisoners could be released prior to the Palestinian elections.

They reiterated that no one convicted of killing or injuring an Israeli would be released at this stage.

## KAHALANI

(Continued from Page 1)

also visited the Golan yesterday in a show of solidarity with residents. MK Zevulun Hammer said the party would submit a bill which, if approved, would prevent the evacuation of any settlements.

Despite the defiant atmosphere in Katzrin, there are signs the atmosphere on the Golan has changed, and banners have suddenly sprung up in favor of a peace treaty with Syria — even at the expense of withdrawal.

Some residents said they intend to hold a counter rally in support of peace with Syria, even if it means full withdrawal.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, speaking to members of the NRP's political secretariat, reportedly expressed the hope that "Israel will not have to retreat to the shores of Lake Kinneret as part of a peace deal with Syria."

The meeting was closed, but Barak is reported to have spoken with considerable ambivalence about the emerging agreement with the Syrians.

But he cautioned that no deal will be struck "unless the Syrians give a clear answer as to what they consider as the ultimate nature and the substance of the peace as they envision it. This is crucial and basic."

Sarah Honig contributed to this report.

## SOCIAL & PERSONAL

Mrs. Reuma Weizman, wife of the president of the State of Israel, attended yesterday's distribution of the Lola Beer-Ebner scholarships at the British WIZO Vocational School for Girls in Jerusalem. Present were the donor, Mrs. Lola Beer-Ebner, World WIZO President Mrs. Raya Jaglom, members of the World WIZO Executive, and Mrs. Esther Rubin.

## DEATH NOTICE

Herbie Rothenberg (ex El-Al), London, December 26, Golders Green Crematorium, December 29, 1995.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Arab FMs meet on peace process

Eight Arab foreign ministers began a two-day meeting in Damascus yesterday to discuss the Middle East peace process and other major issues affecting the Arab world. Syria expects to secure support for its position in peace negotiations. Ministers from the six Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain — were joined by the foreign ministers of Egypt and Syria for the parity.

### Ramon keeps eye on Rosh Ha'ayin, Safed

Interior Minister Haim Ramon has appointed an overseer to monitor the financial administration of the Rosh Ha'ayin and Safed municipalities. The appointment was made after Rosh Ha'ayin's deficit reached NIS 28 million on September 30 and Safed's deficit reached NIS 22m. on the same date.

### Tsomet orders primary recount

The Tsomet election committee has ordered a full recount of all primary ballots, after the manual count and the computerized tally were found to differ. The upshot of the incongruity was that MK Haim Dayan has moved one slot up the party list of Knesset candidates, to third, pushing MK Moshe Peled down to fourth. Initially there was a single vote difference between the two but a manual count showed Dayan was actually five votes ahead of Peled.

### School with high radon level closed

The Mamiachti Bet school in Jerusalem's East Talpuz section — where radon concentrations more than 50 times the permitted level were discovered last week — has been closed. The school will not reopen until analysis of the findings of tests carried out there by the Sorek nuclear research center is completed, the Environment Ministry spokesman said yesterday. Meanwhile, checks were begun at other schools in the neighborhood to establish radon levels there.

### South Korea to purchase Israeli drones

South Korea is close to final approval of a plan to buy \$32.5 million worth of Israeli-made unmanned drone aircraft, the Defense Ministry said yesterday. The purchase of the remotely-piloted-vehicles (RPV) would take place over three years starting in 1997, it said.

### Appeal filed to enforce Long School Day law

Prof. Michael Bar-Zohar yesterday appealed to the High Court of Justice to order Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein to enforce the Long School Day law. Bar-Zohar, as an MK, introduced the bill in 1988 and it was adopted as a law in 1990. In his appeal, Bar-Zohar charged that Rubinstein had circumvented the law by appointing a committee to look into it which he said has met only four or five times.

### Car thief steals baby by mistake

A car thief unknowingly took off with a baby in the back seat of a car he stole in Jerusalem yesterday, later abandoning the 18-month-old on the side of the road in the Baka neighborhood. Police sent a helicopter into the air and set up roadblocks; the baby was found unhurt by pedestrians, not far from the family's home. The mother had left the car's engine running and gone inside for a moment.

### Police won't confirm threats on Haber's life

Police yesterday refused to confirm reports that threats on the life of Eitan Haber have caused them to increase security around his home. "Just as we are guarding the homes of politicians, ministers, and others who may be vulnerable to threats, we are also patrolling around Haber's home," a senior police officer said. "But as far as I know, there are no new threats on his life."

### Marzel sentenced to three months

Former Kach leader Baruch Marzel was sentenced by Jerusalem District Court yesterday to three months in jail, and three months suspended, for disturbing the peace in Jerusalem some four years ago. Marzel will appeal.

### Arafat meets with Khazakh leader

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat discussed bilateral relations yesterday with the president of Khazakhstan, the second head of state to visit the Gaza Strip. The Khazakh president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, told Arafat that his country will open a representative office in PLO-ruled areas and will help train Palestinians to build their institutions. He also called for Israel's withdrawal from all occupied lands. "Your visit to Palestinian territory is an honor. We need your technical assistance and I'm sure we'll get it," Arafat told his visitor.

## Ivry: 'No limit' to possible cooperation with Jordan

ON LEVY

DEFENSE Ministry Director-General David Ivry paid a one-day visit to Jordan yesterday, telling his Jordanian hosts: "We each have something to learn from the other, and there is no limit to the potential for cooperation between us."

During the visit, Ivry met with the Jordanian chief of staff, head of intelligence, the head of the planning and logistics division, and other senior officers. Discus-

sions focused on defense cooperation between the two countries, including defense industries.

Ivry also observed Jordanian army maintenance and rehabilitation work in Zarqa, and was accompanied on the trip by Defense Ministry deputy director-general for foreign relations Kuti Mor, the head of the ministry's Export and International Assistance Department David Shoval, and others.

### Religious council head killed when tree falls off truck

YEHOSHUA Avitan, head of the Beit She'an Religious Council, was killed yesterday evening near the Mehola Junction in the Jor-

dan Valley, when a tree being carried by a truck fell on his car. The truck driver was detained for questioning.

## PULLOUT

(Continued from Page 2)

the remoteness of the meeting site, chosen in part to keep around the conference table, State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said on a press tour of the facility a few hours before negotiators arrived. "This is a preliminary meeting, so we're going to go light on the protocol," he said.

An agreement is not anticipated at this point, but US Secretary of State Warren Christopher has said he expects a framework for future peace negotiations to emerge. He plans a Middle East tour starting January 10.

"There is optimism in the region about achieving progress in these negotiations," Muallem said in an interview published yesterday in the leftist Beirut newspaper *As-Safir*. "I hope this optimism does not end up with disillusionment when the talks are over."

"We are going into the negotiations with an open mind and clear-cut instructions from our leadership to defend our fundamental rights ... and to show flexibility in realms that do not endanger these rights."

But a senior Syrian official said success would require Israel to change its previous positions and to translate its positive statements about peace into practical steps.

"Syria wants the Maryaud negotiations to succeed," he said. "A breakthrough in the Syrian-Israeli peace talks could be achieved very quickly if Israel clearly declares its readiness to withdraw fully from the Golan Heights."

"Israel should agree to establish a just and comprehensive

peace, which is based on UN resolutions. Failure of the talks would have negative impacts on the whole region."

Mohammed Khair Wadi, editor of the official daily *Tishria*, said in a front-page editorial the Peres government should abandon the elements which blocked the peace talks in the past.

"The talks were blocked because of the obstinacy of the previous Israeli government and its rejection of a comprehensive settlement, which is based on full peace for full withdrawal and the establishment of equal and balanced security arrangements," Wadi said.

He said insistence by the Rabin government to apply the peace deals with the Palestinians and Jordan to the Syrian track had led to the deadlock.

"The formula for peace with Syria will be different from all other deals ... Syria would never change its positions under any circumstances and she will not submit to any pressures or threats," Wadi added.

Israel and Syria imposed a news blackout on the talks.

"One of the new elements is that absolutely nothing of what will be said will be announced to the press — neither before nor during," Savir told Israel Television's Channel 1 last night. "There will be a total blackout and I think that is the most helpful way."

"There will be new approaches, I think on both sides, because we have to succeed in really transforming what was a very bitter confrontation between our two countries towards a new era of peace."

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Mourning by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, brothers and their families, and grandchildren. The funeral will take place today, Thursday, December 28, 1995 at 2:15 p.m. at the Yarkon Cemetery. Shiva at his home, Pithov Woskowitz 10, Apt. 11, Tel Aviv.

The Jewish Agency for Israel World Zionist Organization extends its deepest condolences to

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مكتبة القدس



# Shohat: ECI Telecom likely to open plant in Ofakim



Employees of Ouman Knitting Mills in Ofakim demonstrate outside the Knesset yesterday, as their plight is discussed inside. (Isaac Harari)

EVELYN GORDON and JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

THE chances are good that ECI Telecom will immediately open a plant in Ofakim, which would provide employment for 50 people now, 250 by the end of next year and 500 within two years, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat told the Knesset Finance Committee yesterday.

At the same time, more than 150 employees from Ouman Knitting Mills gathered outside the Knesset to petition government officials to prevent the closure of their factory.

Shouting "Shimon Peres, we're on the map," the workers hoped their efforts would safeguard their jobs.

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, Yitzhak Gozlan, head of Ouman's workers' committee, met with Knesset Speaker Sheva Weiss to discuss the expected impact the closure will have on Ofakim and to request government intervention to maintain the factory.

Ofakim, a town of 22,000, has 13.4 percent unemployment. The closure will cause a 6.6 percent increase.

A delegation of Likud MKs, headed by party chairman Binyamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, visited the Ouman plant in Ofakim. Netanyahu said the govern-

ment must do everything possible to keep the plant open, adding that the government had promised a change in national priorities, but the change had done nothing for development towns.

"The government, he said, 'only gives money to those sectors close to it and to the Palestinian Authority.'"

Meretz Knesset faction chairman Ron Cohen blasted Netanyahu's contention that Prime Minister Shimon Peres worries more about unemployment in Gaza than in Ofakim.

"As one who stood by the workers of the dozens of factories closed when the Likud was in power - whose workers were thrown onto the trash heap - I never saw Netanyahu extend a hand to a worker or an unemployed person."

"During the Likud years, unemployment was 11.5%, and now it's 6%."

Shohat insisted the Treasury will not agree to keeping Ouman alive by artificial injections of cash. Given the statement of David Weinsal, managing director of Ouman's parent company, Clal, that the factory has no markets for its products and is therefore not viable, this would simply

be a waste of money, he said. Instead, Shohat said, Ouman's workers should accept Clal's offer of employment in its Beersheba and Kiryat Gat plants.

These plants are, respectively, 25 km. and 40 km. from Ofakim, which is a perfectly reasonable commute, he said.

Shohat did promise, however, to extend government subsidies for people employed in public works projects in Ofakim, to avoid throwing more people out of work right now, according to Finance Committee chairman Gedalya Gal (Labor). These subsidies were supposed to end on December 31.

Gal said the committee was agreed that Ofakim deserves some kind of special assistance, and will ask Shohat and Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish to report back to it in a month on what has been done.

Following his meeting with Weiss, Gozlan said the Speaker had said he would speak with Shohat and Peres regarding alternatives to the closure.

Gozlan, however, said he was unconvinced that the government really cares about Ofakim's residents and said all schools, offices, and factories in the town will strike today.

## Bill would extend statute of limitations in cases of sex crimes against minors

EVELYN GORDON

THE statute of limitations on sex crimes against minors will be extended, to enable more perpetrators to be prosecuted, according to a bill approved by the Knesset Law Committee yesterday.

The bill will now be sent to the plenum for second and third readings.

Currently, the statute of limitations on sex crimes is 10 years.

However, many young children who are sexually abused by family members do not file complaints until they are grown up and out of the house.

By that time, the statute of limitations has often expired, and the abuser cannot be prosecuted.

The committee, therefore, decided that the statute of limitations in the case of sexually abused children will start running only when the victim turns 18.

This extension will apply only if the perpetrator was a family member or someone in a position of trust vis-a-vis the victim, such as a teacher, doctor, or dorm counselor.

In addition, if more than 10 years have passed since the crime was perpetrated, an indictment will require the approval of the attorney-general.

Committee chairman Dedi Zucker (Meretz) said the change is necessary to increase the prosecution of those who sexually abuse minors.

Otherwise, he said, there is no deterrent against such crimes, since perpetrators know the chances of prosecution are very small.

According to Association of Centers for Aiding the Victims of Sexual Abuse, 94 percent of the complaints the centers receive come from people who were abused before they turned 18.

Some 57 percent of complaints come from victims who were abused before the age of 12. Half of the victims are reporting incidents that occurred more than five years ago, while 22 percent are reporting incidents of abuse that occurred more than 15 years ago.

## High Court urges army to rethink slapping criminal record on 1st-time drug users

EVELYN GORDON

THE military has every right to try first-time drug users in its own way, but it should reconsider slapping such offenders with a criminal record, the High Court of Justice said yesterday.

The court was hearing a petition by six soldiers doing compulsory service indicted for using "soft" drugs (marijuana or hashish). All were first-time offenders, and committed their crime while at home on leave or in some other non-military framework.

Civilian courts frequently sentence first-time soft drug users without convicting them to avoid giving them a criminal record which could damage their chances of getting into university or obtaining a job.

Army courts, however, cannot do this, so the petitioners said they were being discriminated against in a way that could severely damage their future.

They therefore asked that instead of being indicted for drug use, the army indict them on some other charge, such as failure to obey an order, which does not create a criminal record.

Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Ya'acov Kedmi and Yitzhak Zamir said the army was right to indict the six on drug charges as civilian use was only "a step away" from using drugs in a military framework, especially because soldiers can be recalled back to base at any moment. But the justices recommended that the army rethink its policy of slapping first-time offenders with a criminal record.

## Massive drug party in India draws 'thousands of Israelis'

BILL HUTMAN

UNDERCOVER policemen may go to India to gather information on a massive illegal drug party involving thousands of Israeli youths now under way on the coast of southwest India.

The party - which has become a tradition in recent years - has been described as "the biggest drug party in the world," and attracts youth from all over the world.

The party began earlier this week and is expected to continue several more days.

Police sources said that Israelis there are involved in drug sales from who may be arrested on their return to face charges in India. "We see the war on drugs as our most important job in fighting crime," Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz told reporters yesterday.

The police narcotics and intelligence divisions recently completed a report outlining Israeli involvement in drug use and sales in India.

The sources said this week's

party was not a surprise. The party is being held on several beaches in the Goa region.

One beach is nicknamed "Tel Aviv Beach."

Ron Shorer, director-general of the War on Drugs Authority, estimated that "thousands of Israeli youths" were participating.

"It makes us feel like we've failed," Shorer said.

"We have to think about what we are doing here in the area of education that would allow something like this to happen."

Israeli young people have converged on the Goa beaches from all over the Far East, where they have ventured on their post-army trips.

The organizers, allegedly including Israelis, set up large sound systems and brought in food and craft vendors, as well as drug pushers, to cater to the crowds on the scenic beaches.

Shorer said that everything from hashish to LSD is being sold, sometimes in especially dangerous "cocktail mixtures."

## 22.8% of nation's children living in poverty

A TOTAL of 438,000 children - 22.8 percent of the nation's children - were living under the poverty line during 1994, according to the annual statistical abstract published yesterday by the National Council for the Child.

According to the abstract, there are 1.92 million children in Israel (35 percent of the

population), with the average number of children per family 2.3 in 1995, compared to 2.7 in 1980.

More than 133,000 children lived in families whose entire income was derived from welfare payments.

Large pockets of children living in poverty were found in Bnei Brak (40 percent), Jeru-

salem (33.9%), Netanya, Sderot, Beersheba, Ofakim, and Tel Sheva, among other places.

The preferred leisure activity of the country's youth during the past year was going to the movies, restaurants, and coffee shops. Sixteen percent of youngsters reported watching six hours of television or

more a day. Eighty-seven percent said they read a daily newspaper.

Statistician Asher Ben-Aryeh, the editor of the abstract, said the social gap between the poor and well-off youngsters in the country is widening in other areas as well, including education and leisure activities. (Itim)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sarid bans performing acts using wild animals

When the circus comes to town, expect to see clowns and acrobats, but not bears, tigers, or elephants, as Environment Minister Yossi Sarid has instructed the Nature Reserves Authority to ban acts involving performances by wild animals. The ban also determines that films, commercials, posters and television programs may only show wild animals in their natural environment.

Liat Collins

### Leah Rabin plans to write memoirs

Leah Rabin wants to write a book about her life with Yitzhak Rabin, she said yesterday. "This is the most important thing to me, to sum up this chapter of my life with Yitzhak, the bitter end and the obvious conclusions," she told Army Radio. She said she would start writing once she has answered a flood of condolence letters. It was not clear if she has a publisher. An earlier memoir, *All the Time His Wife*, has been published in Hebrew.

Itim

### Flu, Hanukka blamed for blood bank deficit

JUDY SIEGEL

SO many Israelis have been on vacation abroad or sick in bed with the flu in recent weeks that Magen David Adom's blood bank is suffering from a severe deficit. Dozens of elective operations have had to be postponed due to the blood shortage, according to Dr. Amnon Ben-David, head of MDA's blood services.

"Because of cheap air fare, Hanukka seems to have become a going-away holiday like Pessah and Succot," said Ben-David, adding, "We would station a bloodmobile at the airport, but people going on vacation aren't in the mood for it."

MDA welcomes healthy donors with any blood type, although Type O is most desirable. Donors receive a year's blood insurance for themselves and their immediate family.

MDA branches in the three main cities and the Tel Hashomer blood center will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. today and from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. tomorrow. Most other branches around the country will accept donations this afternoon from 4:30 and tomorrow until 12:30. For details, call 177-022-5911.

## New steps to block bank robbers

LIAT COLLINS

THE Knesset Interior Committee yesterday accepted police recommendations on the prevention of bank robberies. The measures to be put in force include closed-circuit TV cameras, alarm buttons linked to police switchboards, and guards. The banks will foot the bill for the measures.

Bank representatives must present their plans to Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal within six months and the implementation is scheduled to start a year later.

"Banks will no longer be an open safe for anyone who wants to write a note demanding money, like they were during the summer," Shahal said.

Bank representatives complained that the regulations transfer the responsibility from the police to the banks and that the plan would cost millions of shekels. They said \$7 million had recently been invested in closed-circuit cameras.

Shahal rejected the complaints and told reporters, "The regulations were passed after consultations with the Association of Banks, which represents all the banks."

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## The Jewish Agency for Israel - Notice on Transferring Goods to the Customs Authorities

According to our registry, the goods listed below have been stored in bonded warehouses of the Jewish Agency (The Agency) in Tel Aviv for more than one year. The Agency gives notice that, pursuant to the customs regulations, these goods must be removed from the warehouses and transferred to the jurisdiction of the customs authorities, to be sold or destroyed. Last date for claiming goods: January 31, 1996. Where goods are not claimed by the above date, the Agency will act in accordance with the customs regulations. To obtain your goods, you must apply to the Agency's warehouses in Tel Aviv, Sunday - Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Tel. 06-277654, bringing your ID card, Teudat chet, documents justifying delay in goods (audat ba'at), cash to cover charges, and documents attesting your new immigration rights. The Agency will not be responsible for goods after their transfer from the warehouses in Tel Aviv to the customs authorities, which will then assume legal jurisdiction over the goods.

Owner's Name	Item No.	Delivery Date	Area	Delivery No.
BITION	0626269	28/04/94	0126/93	161427
BITION	0626269	28/04/94	0126/93	161428
NAMAZOV	0626181	21/07/94	0072/94	161480
RONALD DAVID	00000001	08/02/94	0038/94	161484
RABINOVITZ	0627208	12/09/94	0121/94	161485
RABINOVITZ	0627203	12/09/94	0121/94	161486
RABINOVITZ	0627203	12/09/94	0121/94	161487
KOREMAN	0627318	30/10/94	0130/94	161488
NEHER	0627771	27/11/94	0150/94	161482
NEHER	0627771	27/11/94	0150/94	161483
TAUBA	0611084	01/12/94	0179/94	161489
BEN-ZIMRA	0626217	24/03/94	0217/93	163857
DARYZOV	0626208	08/04/94	0217/93	163858
FRIEDMAN	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163859
RABINOVITZ	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163860
LAUT	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163861
BERENBAUM	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163862
ITZHAKOV	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163863
YEREMIAH	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163864
YEREMIAH	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163865
YEREMIAH	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163866
PELMAN	0626208	11/04/94	0192/92	163867
ATLAS	0641822	02/01/94	0251/93	163868
ATLAS	0641822	02/01/94	0251/93	163869
ATLAS	0641822	02/01/94	0251/93	163870
ATLAS	0641822	02/01/94	0251/93	163871
ATLAS	0641822	02/01/94	0251/93	163872
KALITAROV	0619708	13/02/94	0079/93	163873
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RUMANOV	0626401	18/12/94	0179/94	164025
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DEVORACHA	0626214	22/12/94	0179/94	164044
KROVITER	0626401	28/12/94	0179/94	164045
KROVITER	0626401	28/12/94	0179/94	164046
SHETER	0626401	04/07/94	0037/94	165008
HILAVITZ	0626169	04/07/94	0033/94	165007
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# NATO chairs first talks between Bosnia military foes

POREBRICE, Bosnia — Bosnia's rival military commanders yesterday held their first peace talks in a bleak no-man's-land of bunkers and minefields chosen by NATO to drive home the horror of their conflict.

Maj.-Gen. William Nash, head of US troops in NATO's Bosnia peace force, convened the gathering so the warring parties' commanders could discuss implementing peace by removing millions of mines strewn across the country.

They met in the remains of a shelled restaurant straddling the snow-covered front lines in north Bosnia where Muslims, Serbs, and Croats fought some of the fiercest battles of the worst European conflict in 50 years.

The grim battlefield zone was meant "to symbolize the horror of war and get on with the peace," Nash's aide, Col. Henry Strathman, told reporters.

This was the first meeting of a Joint Military Commission established under the terms of a peace treaty signed in Paris on December 14.

It was convened in Serb-held Porebrice in north Bosnia, the last area of the country where peace took hold.

Nash chose a no-man's-land of bunkers, checkpoints, and minefields at the edge of a charred and shell-scarred wood, with a shat-

tered church tower in the distance.

The ex-warriors arrived separately in armored columns to meet Nash, commander of NATO's Task Force Eagle, pledged to keep the peace, by force, if needed.

Bosnian Croat Military Forces Commander Djuro Matuzovic rumbled in on the back of a US Bradley fighting vehicle at the center of a military convoy.

Bosnia's Serb Army leader, Gen. Novica Simic, arrived in another column in a Danish armored personnel carrier.

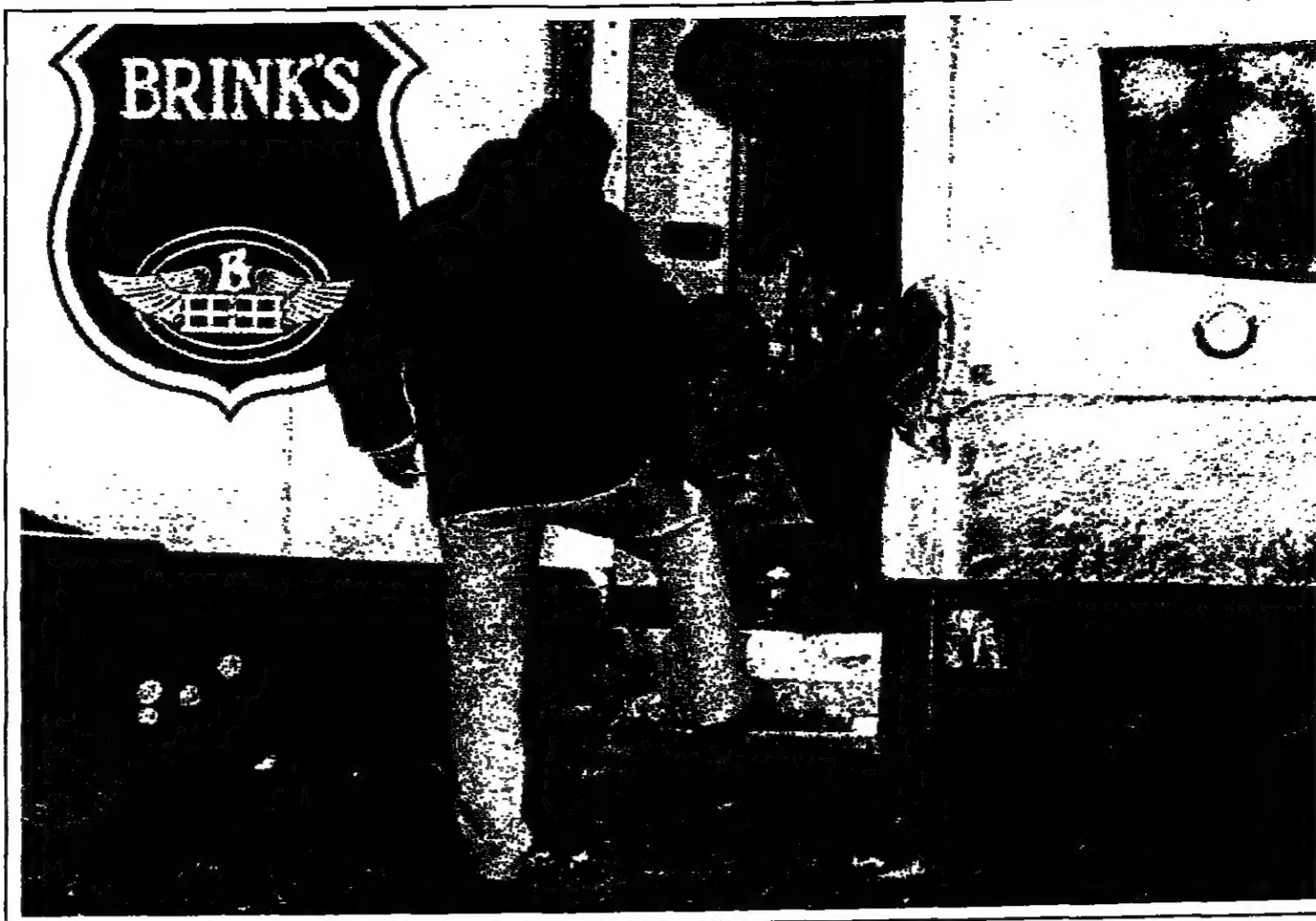
The Bosnian Muslim Army sent a colonel, Effendic Muharem. He drove in, unguarded, in a slightly battered red Opel.

They talked for an hour over a folding table, smoking cigarettes and cigars and drinking coffee in a room where one standing wall was dominated by an elaborate mural whose faces had been obliterated by gunfire.

At the end of the talks, Nash led the men from the house, where they posed briefly for pictures, smiled, and shook each other's hands amiably before disappearing again behind their respective lines.

Aides said they discussed removing mines to make it safer for NATO patrols to move around but provided no details.

Up to six million land mines are believed to be strewn around Bosnia. (Reuters)



Police remove the body of a crew member of a Brink's car who was killed during an attack in Lesquin yesterday. (Reuters)

## French gangsters assault armored car, kill 1

LILLE, France (AP) — Hooded gangsters attacked a Brink's armored car with a rocket launcher and assault rifles yesterday, killing one of the escorts and escaping with the loot. Police said the car's two other escorts were injured in the attack.

The group of about 10 men used a roadblock to stop the armored car near the Lille airport. They ordered the driver of a pickup also stopped by the roadblock to get out and flee. But the three employees in the Brink's car refused.

That's when the assailants, wearing hoods and black clothes, opened fire on the car with assault rifles and used a rocket launcher to open the car's door, according to the driver of the pickup. He had fled into nearby bushes and witnessed the attack.

He said the heist lasted 15 minutes and the assailants calmly left in two cars.

"We're clearly dealing with a team of really professional bandits," said Lille Police Commissioner Alain Epstein. He said the assailants were "determined, organized and with-

out scruples."

He said he didn't know how much money they stole from the armored car, but said it was picking up money from supermarkets.

Police recovered about 70 shells from Kalashnikov assault rifles. The armored car was riddled with holes and its side door was blown out. Four bags full of money were left behind.

Police were investigating the possibility that the attack was carried out by the same gangsters who committed a similar heist in Brussels several days ago.

## Secular Turk alliance search likely to have problems

ANKARA (Reuters) — Turkish parties yesterday set about forming a secular alliance to block Islamists from taking power after weekend elections but mutual resentment between the party lead-

ers means problems loom. "I believe there will be a coalition soon — there are no top-level meetings at the moment but behind-the-scenes work is going on," said an aide to Prime Minister

Tansu Ciller. "But I don't think the coalition can last long and I can foresee new elections in less than two years," he told Reuters.

Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and rival conservative Motherland Party (ANAP) came in together behind the Islamists in Sunday's polls, winning around 40 percent of the vote between them against just over 21% for the Welfare Party (RP).

Analysts fear a further power vacuum in Turkey — where there has been stop-gap rule since Ciller's right-left coalition collapsed in September — if the conservatives cannot unite.

Ciller and ANAP leader Mesut Yilmaz announced on Tuesday that they had agreed on an alliance, with backing from one or two left-wing parties in the new five-party parliament.

But 24 hours later a top DYP official cast doubts on the coalition's viability by rejecting ANAP's favored candidate for a left partner. He suggested early polls if no deal was cut.

DYP deputy chairman Tefvik Diker said his party would not go

into government with the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of veteran Bulent Ecevit, an opponent of Ciller's pet projects of customs union with Europe and privatization.

If the conservatives were to unite they would need to include Ciller's former social democrat coalition partners, Diker said. Otherwise ANAP could try a coalition with Welfare.

"If none of these work, the constitution has a clause requiring early general elections," he told Reuters.

Both Ciller and Yilmaz have ruled out allying with Welfare, but some senior officials in RP and ANAP — which absorbed a small, nationalist-Islamist party before the polls — have told newspapers that an ANAP-RP combination was not impossible.

The rightist alliance — ANAP-RP — has been long called for by the business community and media to treat Turkey's economic ills such as 80 percent annual inflation and slow privatization.

But deep rivalry and resentment between Ciller and Yilmaz

stopped them uniting in September to replace the collapsed government. ANAP and the left led the way in sinking Ciller's minority rule in a vote of confidence.

Their rival bids for the top post could stop them again.

"Since all four leaders are saying ANAP-RP there should normally be no government problem," columnist Bilal Cetin wrote in the liberal *Yeni Yuzyl* daily.

"But there is a very serious problem that no one has yet mentioned; who will be prime minister in this government?... The tactical battle between Ciller and Yilmaz has already begun."

Yilmaz, apparently more concerned that Ciller does not regain her post, said a third person may have to be chosen as prime minister to avoid a leadership battle. Yilmaz is due to meet Ecevit again today, while no further talks with Ciller were immediately scheduled.

Ciller appears to be hedging her bets until President Suleyman Demirel appropriates the job of forming a government — which may not happen until mid-January.

## Floods hit Brazil, Albania

News agencies

TORRENTIAL rains pounded southern Brazil for the third straight day yesterday, killing at least 28 people and leaving more than 3,000 homeless, authorities said.

Flooding and mudslides in the state of Santa Catarina have left at least 25 people dead since Monday, Civil Defense Force spokesman Antonio de Castro said. Heavy rain destroyed hundreds of houses, making some 2,000 people homeless in the state, he said.

Meanwhile, thousands of people have been evacuated in northern Albania after heavy rain flooded the region.

About 3,000 soldiers in heavy vehicles and helicopters evacuated 2,000 people from the villages of Kuc, Ajases and Bacallek near the northern town of Shkoder, government spokesman Loren Ligori said yesterday.

## 'Cult ritual involved murder, suicide'

GRENOBLE, France (Reuters) — Fourteen members of the Order of the Solar Temple cult who died in a macabre ritual in France were probably shot by two police officers who then shot themselves, a prosecutor said yesterday.

State prosecutor Jean-Francois Lorans told a news conference autopsies showed 14 people had been shot using a .22-caliber rifle at short distance.

The two French police officers had apparently finally turned their own service revolvers on themselves.

"The two policemen, whose bodies have not been formally identified, most likely shot fellow cult members and burnt the bodies with white spirit (paint thinner) before killing themselves," Lorans said.

He said the tragedy appeared to have occurred between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. in a remote forest clearing on the Alpine Vercoors plateau near Grenoble on Saturday December 16 — before the 16 cult members were even reported missing.

The charred bodies were discovered a week later after four cars belonging to the missing people were found near the scene.

Ten adults each had one bullet wound to the head and another to the chest. An 11th adult had been shot once through the head and three times through the chest.

Three children — aged two, four, and six — had been shot with one bullet each through the forehead.

The 14 bodies were laid out in a star shape, their feet to a fire at the center, in a formation cult experts said meant dying in the shape of the sun, purified by fire.

Lorans said they were lying on their backs and traces of sedatives showed they were probably deeply asleep when shot.

The last two bodies were lying in a different position, Manurhin Magnum 357 police revolvers near their right hands, shot through the head with the bullets entering through the chin.

Two other firearms and a flashlight were found at the scene. The apparent mix of murder and suicide mirrored last year's deadly ritual in which 53 members of the bizarre Swiss cult died in Switzerland and Canada, many bodies bearing bullet wounds.

Lorans said the bodies had not been definitely identified, although there were "certain convergences" with a list of the eight French and eight Swiss nationals reported missing.

It was very likely that among the bodies were those of Patrick Vuarnet, his girlfriend's six-year-old daughter Tanya and policeman Jean-Pierre Lardanchet's two children.

Lardanchet and police colleague Patrick Rostan were reported missing as well as Patrick Vuarnet's mother and girlfriend.

## Zulu violence leaves 135 dead

DURBAN (Reuters) — At least 135 people have been killed in political and criminal violence in South Africa's Zulu heartland province since last Friday, police said yesterday.

The toll compared to 90 victims of violence in KwaZulu-Natal province over the same period a week ago, a police spokesman told Reuters.

In one of the worst incidents, police said more than 600 Zulus armed with spears, axes, and guns swept through rural villages of Shobashobane in Izingolweni, on the KwaZulu-Natal south

coast, burning, killing, and looting in a suspected politically-motivated attack on Christmas Day.

Survivors told reporters that as they fled from an "impi," or Zulu column, advancing toward their village, they ran straight into another marching toward them from the opposite direction in a traditional Zulu battle tactic.

At least 19 people were killed in the attack on homes of families of African National Congress supporters on Christmas Day.

Police said the death toll could rise further. Two of the 19 bodies were found yesterday morning.

The other on Tuesday by a helicopter.

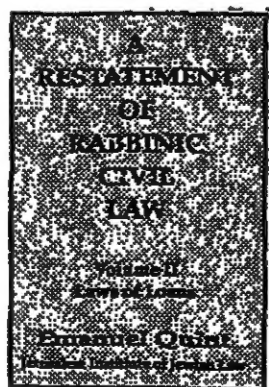
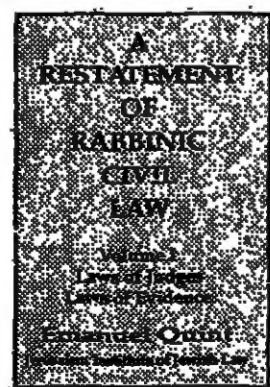
The ANC's KwaZulu-Natal provincial spokesman Dumisani Makhele on Tuesday blamed the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party for the massacre.

But Inkatha spokesman Phillip Powell denied the allegations, saying Inkatha members had been subjected to a wave of killing in the past three months.

A police spokesman said that Shobashobane was quiet yesterday, adding he expected the toll to rise as more bodies were found in burnt-out houses.

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Chloe's butterfly suit with Armani hat (left) and Krizia's velvet swing dress are two of the many outfits available at The Wear House, located at the Herzliya Pithah Industrial Zone.

## Designer labels for less

**W**HEN Lauren Schwartz-Sandberg, a successful organizer of fashion shows, met up with Riva Baranowitz in New York, it was a match made in heaven. The American-born Schwartz, who had been raised in Israel and who had returned to the US to pursue a career in fashion, was eager to come back to Israel for keeps.

Baranowitz, who had raised four children and who for 12 years had chaired Shma, the organization for the hard of hearing, was looking to do something else with her life, but she wasn't sure what.

One thing that the two had in common was that they both adore clothes.

While they were chatting the talk veered toward discount stores such as the famous Labels for Less, and a new idea was born. While Israel has plenty of stores offering cheap imitations of designer lines, there are no discount stores with genuine de-

FLAIR  
GREER FAY CASHMAN

signer-label garments. Schwartz had contacts in the clothing business and Baranowitz had both the money and the right contacts in Israel.

The idea blossomed and earlier this month the two launched their new venture, The Wear House, in Herzliya Pithah Industrial Zone. The showroom features garments by top international designers at discounts of up to 70 percent. The price range is from NIS 220 to NIS 7,100. Most items are only a year out of date, and many come from current collections.

Even affluent women, who can easily afford to pay full price, appreciate a bargain, and will sometimes buy two or even three outfits for what they might pay for one in Tel Aviv's Gan Ha'ir or Kikar Hamadina, where many of the same

designers are represented.

Women in lower income brackets who can't afford to pay somewhere between NIS 2,000 and NIS 3,000 for an outfit in one fell swoop, can buy their designer gear on the installment plan, and have the great feeling of stocking their closets with the creations of Dolce & Gabbana, Chloe, Christian Dior, Valentino, Chanel, Krizia, Christian Lacroix, Giorgio Armani, Victor-Victoria, Oscar de la Renta and many others whose names are bywords in the international fashion industry.

In the short time that it has been open for business, The Wear House has attracted a lot of attention, with clothes-conscious women coming in from all over the country.

Schwartz is currently in New York buying up new merchandise, while Baranowitz is happily coping alone. There are no immediate plans, she says, for starting a second branch but the possibility definitely exists.

## The case of the forged health fund membership

CAVEAT EMPTOR!  
RUTHIE BLUM

**I**T'S no wonder Kupat Holim Menhedet calls itself the "fastest growing health fund!" So said a fuming B.U., when she discovered she'd been made a member without her consent.

The health fund to which she thought she belonged - Kupat Holim Clalit - suddenly had no record of her membership. Believing this to be a case of bureaucratic confusion, B.U. set out to correct the mistake. To her astonishment, she was informed by Menhedet that the transfer was made at her own request. "Your signature is on the form," said the clerk.

B.U. demanded to know how a form she'd never seen could have her signature on it. "Sorry," she was told, "Call the National Insurance Institute [Bituah Leumi]." When B.U. phoned the NII, she was told to write to the Health Ministry. After examining her case, the ministry "returned" her to Kupat Holim Clalit.

When she complained to the police about the forgery of her signature, she was told she must present the forged form as evidence. B.U. was unable to find someone in any of the relevant offices to show her the form.

When the State Health Insurance Law went into effect on January 1, 1995, two main adjustments were made in the administration of our health insurance. While previously we could belong to more than one health fund simultaneously, we now may belong only to one at a time. Also, rather than paying our health insurance directly to the health fund, we now pay the NII, which then allocates funds to each health fund according to its members.

MEMBERSHIP of a health fund



is determined in one of three ways: a person fills out a request form to join - or move to - a particular health fund; a person not filling out a form automatically belongs to the last health fund joined; a person, such as a new immigrant, who never belonged to a health fund is placed in one at the NII's discretion.

In response to my inquiry on behalf of B.U., the Health Ministry's spokesman's office sent me the following statement:

"Since the State Health Insurance Law went into effect, the Ministry of Health has received complaints of forged signatures on request forms for membership to health funds. As the Health Ministry lacks the authority to investigate an issue bordering on a criminal act, any citizen lodging a complaint will receive the form in question with which to go to the police."

The NII's insurance division manager Dani Alkayam reiterated that the NII will furnish anyone who suspects foul play

with this form. In reference to the case of B.U. and Menhedet, Alkayam said that complaints of this sort have been made against the Clalit health fund as well. He too recommends police intervention in the event of forgery.

Menhedet media consultant Tal Rabina said that 2,300 Menhedet members were convinced by sales representatives to join Clalit, supposedly free of charge, and supposedly without forfeiting their membership of Menhedet. "We received heart-wrenching letters from these people, who suddenly found themselves without health insurance."

Though each was eventually returned to Menhedet, it was a costly bureaucratic mess.

What is being done to curb commission-hungry sales reps, whose job is to recruit new members to the fund for which they work?

Rabina explained that these salespeople are hired through employment agencies. "There is

a high turnover rate, as the work is temporary... for students, for example," he said. He believes that the phenomenon of "monkeying around" with request forms is soon to be a thing of the past: "Just as fraud is not in our interest, it is equally detrimental to the reputation of employment agencies to provide corrupt employees."

He insisted that cross references are made by the NII before dispensing money to the funds.

But alas, there seems to be more crossing of wires than of references. To obtain a copy of your request form - as B.U. will be able finally to do - write to: Jackie Abizmil, National Insurance Institute, 13 Weizmann Boulevard, Jerusalem.

You are invited to ask questions or offer personal stories about goods and services in this country. I will do my utmost to investigate each one and provide follow-ups. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

## Cuba's disabling, but not deadly, epidemic of the '90s

**I**T was the largest epidemic of its kind in history.

From November 1991 through the summer of 1993, a bizarre neurological disorder struck more than 50,000 people in Cuba, frightening and mystifying the bereft island nation.

Most victims became partially blind, perceived colors as gray or viewed the world as though through grease-covered glasses. Many also suffered nerve damage in their legs and feet, which caused intense pain, a wobbly gait or numbness so profound they had to deliberate over each robot-like step.

In the four years since the epidemic began, dozens of scientists from around the world have visited Cuba, looking into possible causes from leaking pesticides to exotic viruses to germ warfare by the CIA.

This month, the official US-Cuba government research team released its long-awaited study. The conclusion is as pertinent to US policy as it is damaging to Cuba's pride: Tens of thousands of Cubans were not getting quite enough to eat.

The study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, documents that with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's prime benefactor, many Cubans started skipping meals or squeaking by on a bland diet consisting primarily of beans and unfortified rice.

Thus deprived of vitamins and other nutrients necessary for nerve function, many developed the disorder, called nutritional neuropathy. It was disabling but not deadly, in the twilight between passing hunger and outright starvation.

The massive epidemic ended abruptly, months after the Cuban government handed out vitamin pills. But cases of nutritional neuropathy still occur now and then, according to the Pan American Health Organization. A balanced diet eludes a great many people, and the only thing preventing the return of *la neuropatia epidemica*, some medical researchers say, is the free vitamin pill Cubans are urged to swallow daily.

**THE EPIDEMIC** grew out of what President Fidel Castro called "the special period," a time of strict government food and fuel rationing that followed the Soviet Union's collapse.

Energy blackouts prevailed. Gasoline vanished. At bus stops, long lines of people waited in the heat. Central Havana streets, virtually empty of private cars, were jammed with people on Chinese bicycles that had improbable English names like Forever.

The food shortages were the most agonizing. Pork disappeared, although not from the tourist hotels or the black market. The individual bread ration was a quarter of a loaf per day. The egg

ration amounted to 1½ eggs per week.

A highly educated Havana woman who worked for the UN said in the fall of 1993 that between all the bicycling and skimping, she lost 30 pounds.

If it seems obvious in retrospect that chronic malnutrition brought on the neuropathy epidemic, there was no such clarity when people rather suddenly lost the full use of their eyes in the far-west city of Pinar del Rio in November 1991.

The initial cases were lean men in their 60s who smoked cigars and had no trouble consuming the bottle of rum that was the weekly government ration. Local doctors diagnosed the disorder as "tobacco-alcohol amblyopia." It afflicts Skid Row alcoholics, whose bodies are so wrecked that the scant nutrients they take in are hardly absorbed, while tobacco poisons are rendered more toxic to their nervous system.

Over the next few months, dozens in Pinar del Rio developed blurry or partially blacked-out vision. But not all smoked or drank much. So, according to Cuban government documents, doctors began to suspect that a nutrient deficiency was the root problem.

Throughout 1992, the disorder became more common, and, curiously, spread east. By the end of the year, 472 cases had been reported nationwide.

**THEN**, in early 1993, two things happened that confounded physicians. First, people started developing the lower-limb neuropathy. Second, the epidemic exploded. By mid-March - the peak - about 500 Cubans per day were being found to have neuropathy of the eyes, lower limbs or both.

Now the government began to retreat from early consideration of the malnutrition theory, even as an alarmed public, pointing into hospitals for eye exams, blamed the all-too-evident food shortages.

Taking advantage of the legitimate scientific uncertainty surrounding the epidemic, Cuban officials and doctors raised new possibilities. The tried-and-true Soviet pesticides were gone, replaced by others of dubious South American origin. Weird viruses were rumormongered around the world; had a new strain alighted there? And, dipping into the old well of hostility, some doctors wondered aloud whether the US had surreptitiously spread a nerve-attacking microbe.

During the summer of 1993, Cuba invited foreign scientists, including those from the US, to study the problem. And in September, the US-Cuba study started at "ground zero" in Pinar del Rio.

Dr. Gustavo Roman, a Colombian-born neurologist who participated in

the study, suspected almost from the start that the epidemic reflected a nutrition problem. "It's awfully embarrassing to Cuba," he said at the time. "How is it going to handle this? Go begging for food on the international scene?"

In the study, Cuban and American researchers, led by a group from the US Centers for Disease Control, identified 123 adults with optic neuropathy and matched them against control subjects of the same gender and age.

The researchers analyzed blood and urine, and performed neurological tests from eyeball to toe. Field workers went to subjects' houses and conducted interviews for hours about diet, medications and chemical exposures. They looked into medicine cabinets and under kitchen sinks.

**ACCORDING TO** the just-published report, they found that, compared to the controls, the neuropathy patients had a much poorer diet and were more likely to have missed meals. Nearly 20 percent had sometimes gone hungry for an entire day, compared with 3 percent of the controls. The surveys also showed that the patients were less likely to raise chickens, cultivate vegetables or have outside income.

Dietary surveys suggested that in the months before developing their disease, the patients had comparatively

low levels of Vitamin B-12, riboflavin and niacin. Those B vitamins, which are most abundant in dairy products and meat, are vital to nerve function.

Of course, people go without meals even in the richest nations; what makes these revelations so discomfiting to Cuba is that the socialist government had promised it would not happen there. Ironically, in February 1992, just as the epidemic was beginning, Cuba's vice president, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, said that food production was "the nation's No. 1 priority," and that "we are firm in the belief that it will ensure that the Cuban people have the necessary food."

If the epidemic revealed that the government was failing on a proud promise to feed everyone, it also betrayed the existence of unacknowledged extremes of poverty and wealth. As the *New England Journal* report shows, the neuropathy patients were poorer, less educated and more likely to be unemployed than were the controls.

In fact, poverty may explain why the epidemic began in Pinar del Rio, a place so downtrodden it has long been known as the "Cinderella province."

Inevitably, the epidemic has renewed debate over the US trade embargo against Cuba, which went into effect in 1962. (Los Angeles Times)

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Telephone 02-315666, Fax 02-389527, CIRCULATION - 02-315610, Fax 02-369017, ADVERTISING - 02-315608, 02-315637-40,  
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## Shahal and internal security

**H**EARING Minister of Internal Security Moshe Shahal's comments on the country's internal security problems leaves one wondering if he is the minister in charge or a visitor from parts unknown.

On Sunday he warned that the Russian mafia is about to take over Israel by acquiring companies, properties, and politicians. Coming from the minister, this is quite a puzzling accusation. If foreign criminals are buying into Israeli businesses, it would be nice to know which ones are affected. If these same criminals are breaking the laws of the land, it would be interesting to hear what the police are doing about it. And it would be particularly comforting to know that the Internal Security Ministry has an updated list of their names. Otherwise, uncharitable souls may believe that crying "mafia" is no more than an easy way to capture headlines.

Most curious is the charge that the mafia is trying to gain control of politicians here, "just as has happened in the rest of the world." One can only assume that Shahal is expecting a major scandal to break any minute, something on the scale of the Italian government scandal. It would be nice to know who the corrupt politicians are, and what exactly they do for their mafia bosses. Otherwise, suspicious observers may believe the whole story is a pre-emptive canard.

Shahal is also deeply concerned about the flood of car thefts. With 100 vehicles stolen every day, Israel is the world leader in this field. Most of the stolen cars are transported to the self-rule areas, never to be seen again. And since these areas are only hundreds of meters away, the thieves are having an easy time of it.

To his credit, Shahal has made no bones about his position on this issue. He is definitely opposed to car thefts, and with commendable courage he expresses his unqualified objections freely and openly on radio talk shows and press conferences. But he has yet to come up with a solitary idea on how to fight the plague. Unless, that is, he considers it an irresistible force majeure, a phenomenon against which plain mortals are helpless.

Shahal also definitely opposes the spread of drugs. With the conscientiousness one expects only from the best of citizens, he warns of their destructive effect on the nation's youth. Yet some taxpayers wonder if they may expect something more from the nation's No. 1 law enforcer. Some even want the august ministry to do something about other scourges, like traffic accidents. It is, after all, Shahal's ministerial responsibility to apprehend violators of traffic laws. Yet the much vaunted introduction of traffic policemen to the highways seems to be the country's best kept secret.

Serious as they may be, these cavils pale against Shahal's Knesset statement on Tuesday. In what must be the most extraordinary admission made by a police minister in Israel's history, he said he had not known until the preceding day that only the Border Police operates in the eastern part of Jerusalem. It is as if that half of the city were a border settlement, he said.

It is now more than three years since Shahal became minister of police (now minister of internal security). Yet he did not know that the blue-uniformed police do not move in half of the capital. For at least 18 months of this period, the media have been running stories about the complete freedom with which a foreign police force—not the Russian mafia but Jibril Rajoub's Preventive Security Police based in Jericho—has been running its own "law enforcement" and protection racket in Jerusalem. Its operatives have been kidnapping Arab residents with impunity and dragging them to the Jericho prison, where they are tortured and sometimes killed.

There is even a judicial network run by city Arabs, to which not only its Arab residents, but Jews who have disputes with Arabs often resort, bypassing the Israeli courts.

Shahal need not go far to find an example of PLO forces usurping the authority of his police force. For Christmas Day, Yasser Arafat ordered the Arab papers to feature on their front pages a photograph of himself embracing the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. The accompanying story reported that the patriarch had declared himself the spiritual heir to Sofronius—who in 638 handed the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the Moslem Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab—and welcomed Arafat as Omar's heir. (It may be useful to note that when Omar's forces occupied Jerusalem, the Jews were not allowed to stay.)

One journalist, *Al Quds* editor Maher Alameh, failed to follow Arafat's orders. He was promptly ordered to report to Rajoub's headquarters in Jericho, and when he refused, he was forcibly kidnapped from his Jerusalem home by Rajoub's secret police, 400 of whom are freely operating in the city. As of last night, Alameh—a man who undoubtedly thought he had Shahal's protection—was still in the Jericho jail. This time Shahal has not even made it known whether he opposes kidnappings in what is daily referred to by the government as Israel's eternal capital.

On Tuesday, Shahal announced in the Knesset that 500 men have been added to the police force to guard the holy places in Jerusalem. Considering his performance to date, it must be hoped that none of these sites ends up in Jericho.

WHAT ABOUT THAT  
ISRAELI ASTRONAUT,  
SHIMON?

HERE I AM!



LEON 95

## Peres's deliberate gaffe

**FOUR** days after the Rabin assassination, Shimon Peres told a television interviewer: "I still believe it was a mistake for Israel to bomb the Iraqi nuclear reactor" in June 1981.

The interviewer appeared startled. And with good reason. Millions of ordinary folk worldwide applauded the daring Israeli venture ordered by prime minister Menachem Begin. The flight of 16 F-15s and F-16s in 1981 in the hands of perhaps the most skilled pilots in the world was a brilliant job.

They had flown low across a vast desert. Then they demolished Saddam Hussein's nuclear reactor plant at Osirak, near Baghdad. It was widely reported that the Iraqi dictator had been on the verge of assembling his first nuclear weapon. His dreams of Iraq becoming a superpower went up in a cloud of smoke.

The frustrated Peres languishing on the Knesset opposition benches had moved heaven and earth to abort the operation.

That was over 14 years ago. Since then, every Washington think tank and Western leader, whether publicly or not, has agreed that the Israeli initiative was the right one. This opinion was further vindicated when it took a massive effort by the allied forces to defeat Saddam's armies after he invaded Kuwait in 1991.

The verdict of military experts after the war was clear: Had Saddam Hussein been in possession of atomic weapons, no one would have dared stop him from sweeping southward and gobbling up Saudi Arabia. With control over a major proportion of the world's source of oil energy, he would have achieved his dream of holding the Western powers by the throat.

Why then did Peres oppose one of Israel's greatest victories? His motive was clear. He knew that if Begin succeeded in destroying Osirak, Begin would win the next election, and stifle Peres's dreams of becoming the next Labor premier. He was right. Begin, buoyed by the triumph of Osirak, did win.

But why is Peres still bad-mouthing Begin today? Peres's theory is that if Saddam had gone on building his bomb out in the open, Israel could have tracked his nuclear plans quite easily. But now nobody knows what he is doing in

**URI DAN  
DENNIS EISENBERG**

his underground factories.

The absurdity of this concept raises major questions about Peres's judgment.

PERES's problem is that he refuses to admit he was wrong. When criticized, he hits out angrily: "Don't tell me what to do. Don't try to teach me what to think. I built Dimona."

His achievements as a technocrat

**The premier had his own reasons for breaking Israel's golden policy of nuclear ambiguity**

crat who chivied the French to help Israel build its nuclear reactor in the Negev are admirable. But what Peres did 40 years ago is no proof that he is blessed with wisdom today. Then he worked under David Ben-Gurion, whom *Time* magazine called "the pistol-toting prophet." Ben-Gurion ordered, Peres obeyed.

Today there is no wise man standing behind Peres telling him what to do. His policy-making talents have never matched his excellent technocratic skills. He strides the globe tossing out one half-baked idea after another, only to see them crumble. His latest irresponsible suggestion was his offer to the Arab world to swap an Israeli "atom for shalom."

Without having discussed this vital issue with his ministers, his generals, or the Knesset, Peres threw it out as casually as schoolchildren swap trading cards. He did something no Israeli prime minister has ever dreamed of doing, even in the worst nightmare—blurt out breezily, with a casual wave of the hand: "If we can have peace, I'll relinquish the nuclear."

Israel's Arab neighbors have always been certain that the country has atomic weapons. They now know, from Peres himself, that their assumption has been correct. No backtracking by Peres can possibly repair the damage.

Why did Peres make his atomic comment? It was no mere accident. He is in constant need of

embellishing his image as a peace-maker. One Nobel prize isn't enough. It is the old ghemo syndrome of "wanting to please the goyim." Certainly few Israelis will applaud the way he so casually tossed aside caution and broke the golden policy rule of nuclear ambiguity.

The cat is well and truly out of the bag—officially. Reacting swiftly, the Egyptians stepped up their persistent efforts to demand Israel's signature to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Israel's enemies are also bound to increase pressure on it to sign the NPT.

At the same time, France, a country not surrounded by enemies, is ignoring worldwide protests as it continues with its atomic weapons tests.

According to Israeli and French intelligence sources, France is strengthening its deterrent power because it can see what is happening in Algeria, where Moslem fanatics are likely to seize power. Once the fanatics succeed, they will certainly move heaven and earth to get their hands on nuclear weapons, just as Libya and Iraq tried in the past, and as Iran is doing today. Algeria will pose a major threat to France, which is why Paris is determined to strengthen its deterrent power in good time.

But returning to home, why was Egypt pressing to curb Israel's perceived nuclear activities, and doing so with increased vigor following the Peres gaffe?

A diplomatic source in Paris told us: "The Israel public will eventually wake up from its current inertia and realize that giving away its strategic assets, such as the Judean and Samaria mountain range, the Golan Heights, following Sinai in the past, will leave Israel virtually defenseless against any aggressor."

Because of its weakness, Israel, in a last-ditch effort to avoid destruction, will be forced to thrust its nuclear deterrent capability into the forefront to ward off possible attackers. That is why Egypt wants to cripple Israel's last resort now, by forcing it to sign the NPT before its citizens wake up and see the looming danger.

*The writers are authors of The Mossad: Secrets of the Israeli Secret Service and other books on the Middle East.*

## A night to recall

**SOURNA DANESHVAR**

**I** was in Bethlehem for Christmas. I was fortunate enough to have tickets to the Christmas Mass at St. Catherine's Church. I was excited. It was my first visit to Bethlehem, and this year was the first time Bethlehem would be celebrating Christmas under the Palestinian Authority.

My companion and I arrived just before sunset. To my surprise, the streets leading to Manger Square weren't crowded by pilgrims. Instead, Palestinian Police and other security forces paraded around the city's streets.

In fact, the first thing I saw as I made my way to the square was a young Palestinian being whisked away to a police van. It was a taste of what I would witness during the rest of the evening.

When I entered Manger Square, I was shocked. I had expected Christmas choirs and Christmas decorations. What I found was an overblown painting of Yasser Arafat with a banner proclaiming: "Fatah Welcomes Arafat."

There were scores of Palestinian flags, with and without Arafat's portrait, and instead of Christmas carols, there was the sound of fireworks going off at intervals. (There were some decorations, notably a Christmas tree stuck between a restaurant and a portable lighting generator.)

What I saw in Bethlehem wasn't Christmas. It was the Palestinian version of the Fourth of July. The Palestinians wanted to celebrate their independence, but I don't think they knew how.

The people's reaction wasn't uniform. Some were joyous, and many were welcoming, but many didn't seem happy. More than once I saw the PA police carrying off a young Palestinian. It seemed

**What I saw in Bethlehem wasn't Christmas, but the Palestinian version of the Fourth of July**

that Palestinians with guns, or who knew someone with a gun, were happier than those without guns, or without relatives with guns.

As I made my way away from Manger Square toward the Church of the Nativity, I became more aware of the intense PA security. The front facade of the church was blocked off by police, and, strangely enough, only foreigners or Palestinian security agents were allowed into the church area. Ordinary Palestinians were excluded.

As I entered the church, I finally began to feel some Christmas spirit in the place of Christ's birth. But just as I was about to light a candle for my mother, I was interrupted by a group of Filipino ladies using multiple flashing cameras to blind-effect.

I was surprised there weren't many more worshippers. My companion remarked that just two weeks before, there had been a wait of 20 minutes in line to enter the church. This Christmas night, there was no line.

GETTING into the midnight mass at St. Catherine's was another story. There were some 23,000 requests for tickets, but only a few hundred were issued. There was no line, only a blob of people—and security men who waited, pushed, screamed and elbowed each other.

Inside the church, things were more orderly. The Franciscan monks have centuries of experience in conducting Christmas Mass, and know what to expect.

Some worshippers rushed to grab the few seats allocated to the masses; the rest stood outside, waiting for the dignitaries, including Arafat, to arrive. A friend had told me Arafat was upset that his entourage had only been given 20 reserved seats.

There was nothing which made that mass more special for me than other Christmas masses I have attended. There were the obvious differences: the setting, Arafat, the loud bangs of fireworks.

But for most of the evening, the mood was anything but Christmas-like. What made it festive were the people in the church who, at the stroke of midnight, turned to wish each other a "Merry Christmas."

I'm glad I went to Bethlehem. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience... the key word being "once."

*The writer is currently a Raul Wallenberg Scholar at the Hebrew University.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MEMORY LANE

Sir, — It is with regret and a great deal of nostalgia that I read Sue Fishkoff's article of December 14, "TA's US Cultural Center Library closes tomorrow" — after 46 years.

In July 1949, I was hired by the US cultural attaché to organize and open an information center library on the ground floor of a villa at 20 Bialik Street in Tel Aviv.

Leonard Bernstein wrote his *Jeremiah* in the room that served later as reference room.

On October 19, 1949, we held the festive opening of the center, attended by Moshe Sharett, the Russian ambassador who scanned the titles of every single book, and, of course, James McDonald, the first US ambassador to Israel and many distinguished guests.

After the opening, streams of visitors started coming. Later on, one of our favorite sayings among the staff was "If those walls could talk." Among them, to mention a few, were the young and promising journalist Ephraim Kishon, Yohanan and Rika Zari, Amos Eilon and an Argentinean couple who wanted me to meet their talented seven-year-old son Daniel Barenboim, the children of the painter Reuven, a close and distinguished neighbor. And there were so many others, thirsting for any book, record, pamphlet available from our "older sister," the United States, striving to learn and to strengthen the bonds of friendship with the US.

One cannot write about the US Library without remembering the legendary Ann Davis who joined us in 1950 as first American Library director. Israel remained in her heart as a special place until her recent death.

For me, the close relationship Israel has achieved with the US made it worthwhile to have made my very modest contribution to this end.

**ORA SCHWEITZER**  
(First Assistant Director  
of the US Library)

Tel Aviv.

### REPORTING THE NEWS

Sir, — My friends and colleagues read *The Jerusalem Post* because there is no other English daily newspaper. But the consensus is that your paper fails in the most important area that a newspaper can fail in — it doesn't supply us with the news! Mews means also hearing about the fire in a flat in Holon and the accompanying human-interest story that goes with it, and why the court decided to take a newborn baby away from its mother, and why Dudu Topaz has broken up with his latest girlfriend. In other words, the things that make up the day-to-day fabric of Israeli life, which we as immigrants need to know to feel that we too are also Israeli, in spite of our funny accents and different place of birth.

I am moved to write now because, as I was about to clean out a blocked drain with a locally bought product, my son cried out in horror and showed me an item he had read that morning in the Hebrew paper. It concerned a woman who had lost her eyesight because of a tragic misuse of exactly the same product. How could you fail to publish something so vital for us to know — especially taking into account our difficulty in reading the Hebrew instructions on packets?

**PAMELA LEVENE**  
Moshav Tal Shazar.

We may be skimpy on Dudu's girlfriends, but we do try to cover fires in Holon. Unfortunately, we missed the story about the immigrant who misread the instructions on a label. Our apologies. — *Ed. J.P.*

### CURIOUS

Sir, — It is curious at best to read the editorial of December 18 in which the editor berates Shimon Peres for not following the dictates of the late Yitzhak Rabin.

Isn't it a bit late for the editor to be extolling the virtues of a man whom the *Post* criticized for months?

**GINGER SAUNDERS**  
Jerusalem.

### ISRAEL-US DEFENSE PACT

Sir, — In your December 8 issue, you published two articles on an Israel-US defense pact. Neither article presented an objective discussion of the relative balance of Israeli and American military power.

Four years ago, it took about 150 days for the US to shift the equivalent of 10 divisions and air force, marine and navy air forces, which generated about 1,300 combat sorties a day to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Storm. Today, about one-third of these American military forces no longer exist. By comparison, about 72 hours after mobilization, the IDF could deploy about 17 divisions and the IAF could generate about 2,400 combat sorties a day. In other words, Israel can now deploy substantially more than twice as much real conventional military power in 72 hours as the US could rush to Israel in 72 days. Moreover, the leading edge of these Israeli military forces employs advanced military technology, which is often ahead of that used by the US military.

Within the constraints of the current US defense budget, it would be impossible for the US to deploy more than token forces in Israel and, as previously explained, the US ability to move forces to Israel in an emergency is quite limited.

Deterrence is ultimately dependent on the reality of power. Therefore, an Israel-US defense pact would lack deterrent value. Consequently, an Israel-US defense pact is nothing more than a political fig-leaf designed to give comfort to an ill-informed Israeli public and an even less well-informed American Jewish community.

Withdrawal from the Golan is advisable given certain terms and conditions that can guarantee both security and peace. But withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for a meaningless US security guarantee would be a terrible mistake.

**KENNETH S. BROWER, President,**  
*Spectrum Associates Inc.*  
Springfield, Virginia.

مكتبة القدس



THE JERUSALEM  
POST

# TRAVELER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1995

## THE ROMANCE OF TRAIN TRAVEL

### Viewing the Canadian Rockies from the Tracks

By Kerry Colburn Tessaro

Copley News Service

I love a view. I'm one of those people who, if relegated to a windowless restaurant, will ask for a seat near the fish tank or the potted plants. I pull over when driving along a spectacular stretch of coastline. I'm useless manning a sailboat because I'm forever gazing out at the horizon. I'll hike for miles to reach a summit that promises "breathtaking vistas."

Needless to say, it was time for me to see the Canadian Rockies. Travelers to the best scenery in North America. And the only way to see them was by train.

The one problem with extended, scenic train journeys anywhere in the world is that for number of hours, it's night. That means it's dark. So for 10 hours or so, the most beautiful views may be speeding by while your eyes are closed.

But trains were meant for transportation, and they can't just stop in the middle of the tracks until daylight so that passengers don't miss anything. However, one Canadian train company—Rocky Mountaineer Railroads—offers all-day-light trips on its luxury train, which includes 21 "Signature Service" cars and one new "Gold Leaf Service" dome car, for wraparound views.

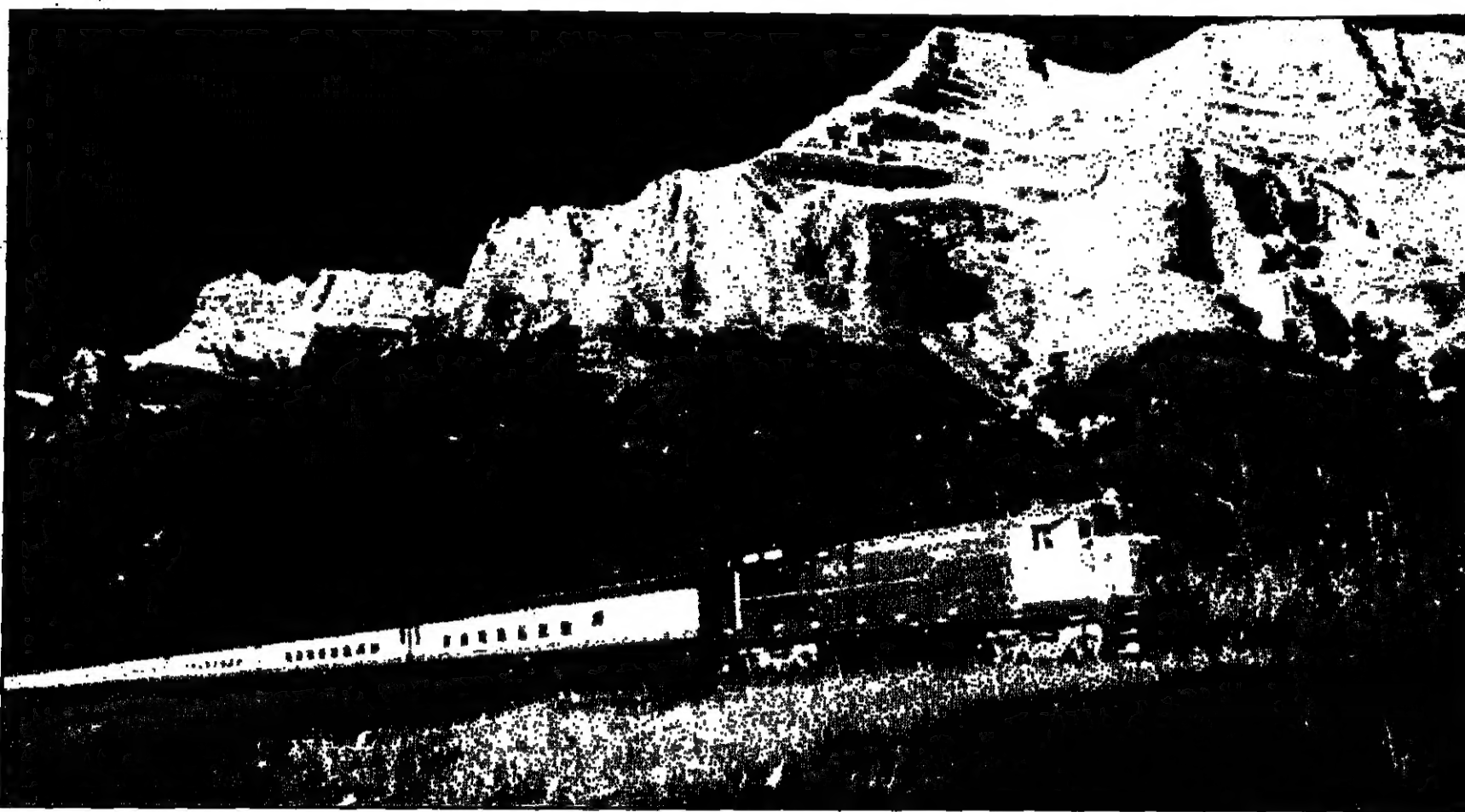
When traveling a two-day route through the Rockies, the train stops in the evening at a halfway point, where passengers are whisked to a local hotel and are returned to the train the next morning.

The train departs from Vancouver, British Columbia, and travels eastbound to Banff and on to Calgary, Alberta. Another route heads to Jasper, Alberta. Passengers can also take the train westbound back to Vancouver. Possibilities abound: Rocky Mountaineer Railroads acts as a full-service travel bureau and can arrange air flights, rental cars and hotels. Passengers can get off the train for a couple of days (in Banff, for example) and then continue on their route later. Most passengers choose to take the train one way and then fly home from their final destination.

My own journey began in Vancouver, a spectacular city. If catching the train here, try to spend a couple of days enjoying the sights first. There are wonderful hotels, terrific restaurants and nightclubs, and famous shopping in this clean and cosmopolitan port city, where clear views of water and mountains frame every view of the downtown skyline.

The train experience begins at the station with the hearty, old-fashioned "All Aboard!" that is called out from the platform when it's time to embark. Rocky Mountaineer staff then gathers beside the tracks, waving to passengers as the train pulls out.

On the first day of the two-day trip I was in Signature Service, the standard class on Rocky Mountaineer. But this is not a standard train. The plush seats recline and can be turned around if traveling with a party of four, so that all can face one another. There is plenty of leg



Train journeys offer a panoramic view of the Canadian Rockies.

Photo by Kerry Colburn Tessaro

room. Oversize picture windows let in sunlight and gorgeous views, so that it doesn't matter if you have a window or aisle seat.

Chatty and charming attendants provide information and commentary at appropriate intervals throughout the journey, highlighting points of interest along the way. (You can also follow the route with a map in the complimentary publication left at each seat.) And when you need to stretch your legs—after all, this is a 12-hour day—small, open vestibules between the cars offer fresh air and unobstructed picture-taking.

The first leg is from Vancouver to Kamloops. The train meanders through the lush and verdant Fraser Valley, following the Thompson River to where it meets the Thompson River. Eric Belanger, director of media and public relations for Rocky Mountaineer, likens the voyage to a "land cruise," similar to being on a river paddleboat of yesteryear. It's a good analogy.

As the Thompson River turns north, the water becomes turbulent. Diehard kayakers and river rafters can be seen lifting their paddles and waving at the train as they hurdle past. Highlights along this leg include Hell's Gate in the Fraser Canyon, the North Thompson Canyon, Suicide Rapids and the Jaws of Death Gorge.

The landscape that was filled with evergreens, waterfalls and verdant meadows earlier in the day became more arid when the train entered a dry belt. This is the region where bighorn sheep are often spotted by alert passengers. The train stopped for the night in historic Kamloops, which means "meeting of the waters," as it is here that the north and south Thompson Rivers meet.

After dinner and a few hours sleep in a comfortable local hotel, I was back on the train for a 7:30 a.m. departure, this time in the new dome car. This car was the first of its kind in Canada, and the train, which debuted in June, was the first new Canadian passenger rail coach in 40 years.

Even though the price for the dome car was significantly higher than the rest of the train, my companions and I agreed it was worth it. You might only see the Canadian Rockies by train once in your lifetime, and you might as well do it in high style.

The dome car, which seats 72, is the only two-story car on the train. Passengers sit on the second level, which is outfitted in a beige-and-buff decor with curved glass windows reaching from seat level up to the ceiling. The atrium-style design creates an airy and open feel

almost like riding with the convertible top down. Sun filters in as you recline in your seat, and you can look around with an almost 360-degree view.

On the lower level is a classic dining car. Whereas Signature Service meals are served at your seat, in the Gold Leaf dome car you have the opportunity to eat at a table facing your friends or fellow passengers in booths for four.

Tablecloths, lighted wall scones and gourmet food, prepared by an executive chef from Copenhagen, Denmark, set the stage for festive meals, and even on this level, while you eat, you can admire views through huge picture windows.

This is the last car on the train, which allows for a spacious open-air observation platform off the back. Small speakers ensure that any commentary from the dome car above can be heard while enjoying the outdoors.

The train left Kamloops, traveling through fields of Russian willows and ginseng. The lush landscape soon returned—rolling hills blanketed in evergreen, rivers flowing into calm, wide lakes dotted with summer houseboats, stone tunnels and osprey nests nestled in the tops of trees. Classical music filtered softly, along with the dappled light, through the dome car. Relaxation is unavoidable, but do try to resist the temptation to fall asleep!

Traveling parallel to the Trans-Canada Highway at some points, the train crossed Craigellachie, where the last spike in the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven in 1885, uniting Canada for the first time. Then, just past Revelstoke, the first snowcapped peak of the Rockies appeared and the passengers went wild. Cameras were focused, people ran down to the deck and the attendants served heavenly chocolate-covered strawberries.

Suddenly, there was no danger of falling asleep or reading that book you brought. On this leg of the train trip, you'll find yourself not wanting to miss a moment.

Jagged, Mauerhorn-like peaks kept rising along the train, coated with fresh snow. From this point until the evening stop at Banff, it only got more spectacular. The train crisscrossed over churning ice-blue streams, winding its way right along the crevasses that separate the endless peaks.

Treacherously steep passes took the train, twisting and turning, through the famed Spiral Tunnels, then past Mount Temple and Castle Mountain.

The squeals of delight and clicking of camera shutters turned to pure awe, with the sudden realization that this couldn't ever be captured on film. The incredible and pristine diversity of Canada was just breathtaking.

When the train rolled into Banff, many passengers left the dome car to stay at this famous, scenic national park area in Alberta. The rest of us continued on to Calgary, enjoying shrimp cocktail, chicken cordon bleu with saffron rice and chocolate mousse in the dining car as the last bits of light radiated out from behind the rugged peaks, now dark silhouettes.

At almost 10 p.m., we reached Calgary, noting that we've spent the last 14 straight hours onboard the Rocky Mountaineer. I never would have thought any view could keep me occupied for such a long stretch. But as I step slowly onto the solid ground of the station, reeling from what I'd seen, I couldn't imagine where the time went.

Kerry Colburn Tessaro is a freelance travel writer.

### IF YOU GO

**WHEN TO GO:** Rocky Mountaineer Railroads has a 20-week season, from May through October. August and September are traditionally the best months to visit Canada, so it is advisable to book well ahead. Although the train can normally accommodate passengers because of the ability to add more cars, tickets in Banff, Jasper and Calgary often sell out ahead of time.

**TOURS AVAILABLE:** Extended one-month and two-day, all-inclusive rail tours through western Canada and the Canadian Rockies are available. Meals, drinks, alcoholic beverages and the overnight stay are all included in the package prices. Both Signature Service and Gold Leaf dome cars are available. Value packages are available in December. All packages are wheelchair accessible.

Travel options and services through Rocky Mountaineer include flights, hotel and rental car arrangements. Also special extended Alaska Cruise packages out of Vancouver. For more information, contact 1-800-468-7269, the representative nearest you, or visit the website [www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com).

## Cruising for Great Travel Photos

By Carl and Ann Purcell

Copley News Service

Travelers on cruise ships ask some unusual questions at the Guest Relations Desk, such as:

- Do the stairways go up as well as down?
- Which way is the ocean?
- Does the crew sleep on board?
- Do you grow your own flowers?
- Does the galley tour include a visit to the

Passengers sunning themselves on the top deck of a ship in the Caribbean make for a great photo opportunity.

ship's kitchen?

• What is the name of the hotel where we'll be staying in port?

• What time is the midnight buffet?

A cruise ship offers special bonuses to a photographer. They're called ports of call. Selecting any cruise should be done with the itinerary in mind. The ports are your contact with new people and cultures.

When visiting the ports of call, it is important to keep your creative eye peeled for dramatic pictures. Have several lenses with you to cover all possible circumstances.

For example, in the middle of a carnival, the Caribbean version of Mardi Gras, steel bands and dancers in colorful costumes will fill the streets in a frenzy of celebration. A 70-210 mm lens will be very useful to pick out faces in the crowd.

When you are walking into the mass of happy revelers, you may prefer a 24 mm wide-angle lens focused at about 2-1/2 feet. The inherent depth of field in the wide-angle lens will keep all the important elements in sharp focus and the resulting pictures will convey the sense of exhilaration around you.

Obviously, the deck areas are best places for taking pictures on a cruise ship. Most ships have several deck levels, and from the aft area, they are like the tiers of a wedding cake. There is usually an out-

door café overlooking the swimming pool.

From a low-level deck, it is possible to photograph a couple at the rail with the impressive wake of the ship behind them. The deck areas of most cruise ships are covered in Astroturf green, and sunbathers on reclining lounge chairs look like candy sprinkles on green frosting.

One parting shot on shipboard photography: A tripod is not very helpful on board ship. There is simply too much vibration and movement to take long exposures with a tripod.

Strangely enough, a child's bean bag can be helpful for slow exposures on a ship. Placing a bean bag on a table or railing and putting the camera on top can absorb considerable vibration and make possible exposures of up to half a second.

A cruise can be a trouble-free vacation. You never have to worry about where you are going to eat or sleep. If you have carefully chosen your cruise so that it has interesting ports of call, your biggest worry will be if you have taken enough film with you. Oh, and yes, if you are still up, the midnight buffet is indeed available every night precisely at midnight.

Carl and Ann Purcell are America's leading travel writing/photography team. Ann Purcell is the president of the Society of American Travel Writers.

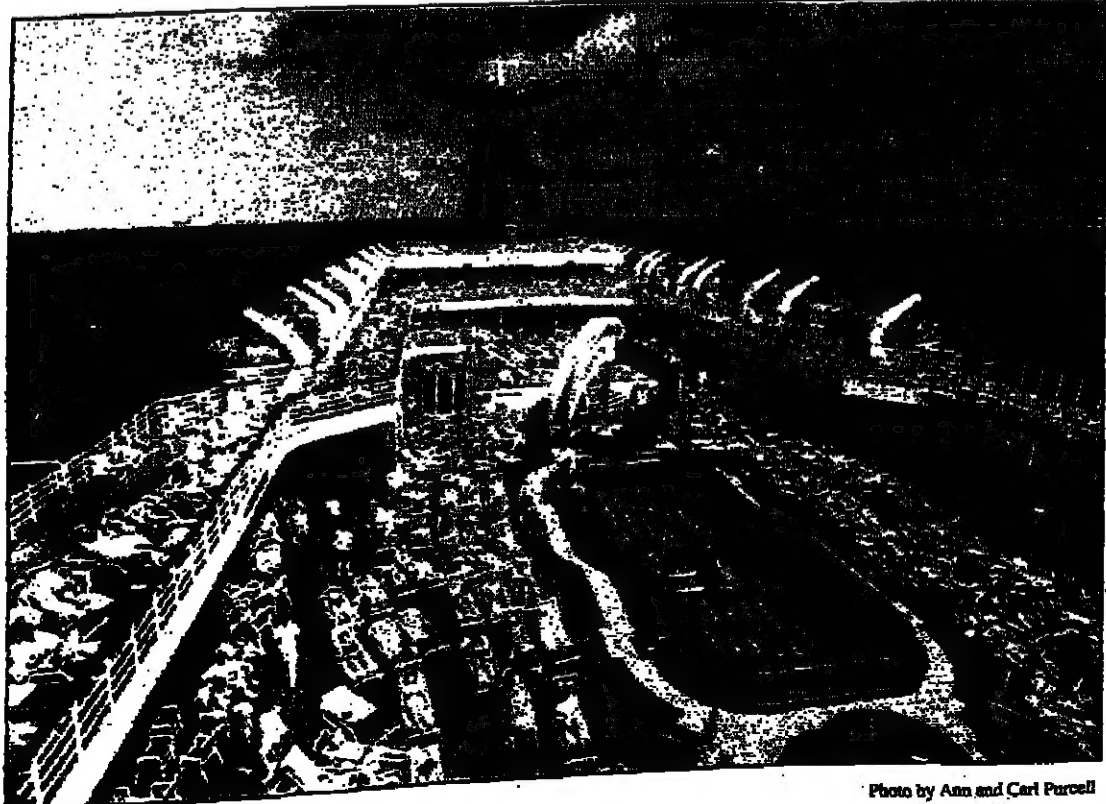


Photo by Ann and Carl Purcell



# Trends: Where to go What to do

by Martin A. Bartels

Vacations are traditionally reserved for the much-needed escape from everyday trials and tribulations. Today, however, more and more travelers are finding destinations that offer more than just relaxation.

The newest trends in travel are to move away from the "destination" trip (to travel to a single spot), and focus on interactive expeditions that are designed to educate, improve one's health and truly experience a place.

"Ecotourism is absolutely where it's at now," said Carol Berland, a Chicago-based travel agent of 20 years. "People—particularly those in the 40- to 55-year-old age brackets—are concentrating on environmentally oriented destinations." Ecotourism evolved as people have come to understand the importance of the environment and their impact on it. Now, not only are trips designed to highlight these values, but even to encourage environmental awareness through active participation in restoration projects.

Some examples include clean-up activities at former research stations in the Antarctic and trail maintenance programs at national parks and preserves. More passive forms of ecotourism include whale watching, diving and rain forest explorations.

"The trend is moving away from the Club Med vacation," Berland said. "If people want to stay in one place, they tend to take cruises now. Or, they'll opt to stay at the more lush, four-star, all-inclusive hotels."

Resorts on islands such as Nevis and St. Lucia, West Indies, for instance, offer all-inclusive packages designed with the explorer in mind. The East Winds Inn and Le Sport on St. Lucia, for instance, offer packages which allow travelers to eat in restaurants outside the resort at no extra cost, and provide coupons for discounts at various places throughout the island. And, the inns on Nevis allow visitors to tour the other resorts, leaving one with the impression that there is no sense of competition among the hosts.

Physical and spiritual well-being are popular themes in travel today. Spas throughout the world have witnessed a significant increase in popularity, offering anything from traditional health treatments to New Age approaches like herbalism and aromatherapy. Spiritual pilgrimages and group-oriented adventure trips designed for businessmen are also popular.

"Heritage" tourism is an offshoot of ecotourism but focuses on a destination's cultural and geopolitical history. This is particularly prevalent in (although not limited to) more remote locations where tourism is not necessarily a major source of the population's income. Trips to such locales as Tibet, rural China, India and even the North American Southwest are all places which cater to heritage tourism.

Adventure travel appeals to younger travelers. Originally intended for thrill seekers, such trips have broadened to include almost any experience that requires physical exertion. The category ranges from safaris to climbing expeditions and sky diving/air surfing trips. Not for the faint of heart.

## HOT SPOTS

The qualities that determine the popularity of a given destination are as varied as the countries themselves. Economic exchange rates, political stability and weather can all influence a destination becoming a tourism hot spot.

## COPPER CANYON, MEXICO

The stunning canyons of Central Mexico are drawing more and more tourists annually, but it's still considered one of the country's best kept secrets. The area is relatively affordable, and there are even some world-class accommodations nearby, though not many.

## THE FORMER SOVIET UNION & RUSSIA

It's still a bargain to visit, but that won't last long. While more appropriate for the seasoned traveler, Russia is one of the most exciting countries in the world. Politics, however, are in extreme flux so careful preparation and a good deal of patience is required for the journey.

## KOREA

As Japan becomes increasingly expensive, Korea is an appealing destination. Korea still has a tremendous history to explore at rates far less expensive than its neighboring countries.

## COSTA RICA & THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Tourism in Costa Rica has blossomed to such an extent that new limitations are being placed on the number of visitors annually. This is particularly true for the nearby Galapagos Islands, which have ironically suffered from the increase in ecotourism.

## NEW ZEALAND

There is something for everyone in this relatively small country, from incredible scenery to outdoor adventures, such as a strenuous hike on the stunning Milford Trail or even heli-skiing in the Harris Mountains. Prices are affordable in-country, but getting there can be a bit expensive.

## HONG KONG

With Hong Kong reverting to Chinese rule, tourists are anxious to observe the coming changes first-hand. There are few indications as to what will happen following the change, but no one wants to miss out on what the dramatic city of Hong Kong has to offer. Travel through mainland China has various restrictions, but group tours are available and typically worth the effort.



Russia's historic architecture attracts many tourists.

## Travel News

### ROAD SCHOLARS

Saga Holidays will offer six new "Road Scholar" programs in 1996 that combine in-depth tours with lectures. Highlights include:

"Greek History and Civilization," a 14-night adventure that takes travelers to Athens and on a seven-night Mediterranean cruise.

"Israel and Egypt: Cradle of Civilization" spends 16 nights traveling from the Old City of Jerusalem to the shores of Galilee and the Nile Valley.

"Flower Shows and English Gardens: Chelsea and Hampton Court Palace" is a 14-night program that brings together leading British horticulturists and two world-famous flower shows. Lectures are provided by the Royal Horticultural Society.

"Shakespeare in England and Italy" spends 13 nights visiting sites in England associated with the Bard and visits to Verona and Venice in Italy, both settings for Shakespearean works. A professional actor will accompany the tour.

Other "Road Scholar" programs visit Poland, America's Navajo country and Spain.

Tour prices start at \$1,799 per person, double occupancy, including air fare.

FYI: Saga Holidays International Ltd., 222 Berkeley Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

### TIDBITS

Travel Smart newsletter promises its readers that they'll never have to pay full price for a hotel room again. Here's how:

Always ask about specials, packages or corporate rates.

Avoid checking in after 9 p.m. The night clerk probably won't have the authority to offer you a better rate.

If you're in town for a convention or sporting event, mention it—hotels often offer special rates for special events.

In an effort to get more business travelers' dollars, hotels are offering a dizzying array of services and perks. A recent issue of Frequent Flyer magazines offers these tips for deciding if extra services are worth extra cash:

Club Rooms are worthwhile if two people share them; two free breakfasts or an evening meal can pay the difference.

If you work from your room, a special floor that offers free local calls and/or long distance access can be worth the extra money. The same goes for an in-room fax.

Match perks to your needs and don't pay for services you won't use.

### ADOPT A WHALE

Every November through April, visitors to Maui, Hawaii, get to see giant humpback whales on their annual migration from cold-water feeding areas to the warm waters of Maui, where they mate and give birth to their young.

Stouffer Renaissance Wailea Beach Resort is offering a special three-night "Adopt a Whale" package. The package includes deluxe ocean-view rooms (the whales can be seen from the shore), a whale-watching cruise for two, a whale-watching welcome basket and an Adoption Request Package containing biographies of humpback whales that have been identified and named. The Whale Adoption Package is sponsored by the International Wildlife Coalition to finance ongoing research of these huge mammals.

The "Adopt a Whale" package is available Feb. 1 through March 31, 1996; it is priced at \$895, based on double occupancy.

### NOSTALGIC THEME PARK

Fans of the Old West can look forward to the new RogersDale USA theme park scheduled to open in Victorville, Calif., in 1997. The brainchild of Western music legends Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and their son, Roy Rogers Jr., construction on the 76-acre park will have three themed areas: The Western Street, The Early California Plaza and The '50s Street.

Plans include six restaurants, 12 outdoor and indoor entertainment venues, museums, galleries, stores and even a wedding chapel. Admission to RogersDale will be free.

FYI: RogersDale USA, (001) 619/243-7300.

### EARNING MILES

Frequent travelers to Asia will be happy to know that guests of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group properties who are members of Japan Airline's Sky Plus and Mileage Bank program will earn 500 miles per stay.

Mandarin Oriental operates hotels in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, London, Macau, Manila, San Francisco and Singapore. There also are two resorts located in Koh Samui and Phuket, Thailand.

### FOG CITY BARGAIN

San Francisco's Hotel Bedford is offering a "Friends Stay Free" program through March 1, 1996. Guests who purchase one room for \$109 per night, single or double occupancy, receive a second room free of charge (both rooms must be used on the same night). Better still, the program is valid during the holidays.

That's hardly surprising, considering that the hotel, which is part of the Kimpton Group of small, boutique hotels, was named "Best Value in San Francisco" by the Zagat Survey. Rooms are decorated with canopy beds and large writing desks (especially good for business travelers), and guests can enjoy complimentary wine served in the Wedgwood Bar each evening.

FYI: Hotel Bedford, 761 Post Street, San Francisco, California 94109; (001) 415/673-6040.

### CROSS-COUNTRY

The Equinox in Manchester Village, Vermont, is offering an affordable three-night "Cross-Country Ski Package" through March 15, 1996.

Priced from \$278 per person, double occupancy, the package includes accommodations, daily one-hour cross-country ski lessons and equipment rental for skis, ice skates and snowshoes. Skiers can take advantage of the Equinox's new Cross-Country Ski Touring Center, which has almost 22 miles of trails, plus ice skating on Equinox Pond and snowshoeing. Guests also enjoy complimentary use of The Equinox Fitness Spa.

Skiers also can join guided tours to nearby Merrick Forest and Hapgood Pond, as well as moonlight ski treks.

For downhill skiers, the Equinox will offer a two-night "Alpine Ski Package" starting at \$221 per person for midweek stays. That package includes lift tickets in addition to use of the Ski Touring Center and fitness spa.

FYI: The Equinox, (001) 802/362-4700.

### STORMY WEATHER

Winter may bring rough seas and chilly winds to the Northern California coastline, but the proprietors of Casa del Mar in Sausalito Beach say that skies are the clearest and visibility is the best at this time of year.

The bed-and-breakfast inn is offering a midweek "Storm Alert" package through March 31, 1996. Priced at \$125 per night, it includes a room with a view of the Pacific Ocean or Mount Tamalpais and full breakfast, plus cocoa with a plate of cookies as a snack.

In addition to clear views, guests will see the highest tides of the year and catch a glimpse of the gray whales as they migrate from Alaska to Baja California.

FYI: Casa del Mar, 37 Sausalito Ave., Sausalito Beach, California 94965; (001) 415/868-2124.

### FYI

The American Automobile Association's Smooth Sailing booklet offers some helpful tips for booking a cruise. Ideas for saving money include:

Book early for the best rates and cabin availability. Look for cruises that offer free air fare to the port city.

Pre- or post-cruise land packages that include accommodations and sightseeing often are a good value.

Always ask about special promotions or discounts.

To receive a copy of the brochure, send a self-addressed, stamped, legal-size envelope to: Smooth Sailing, Mail Stop 75, 1000 AAA Drive, Heathrow, Florida 32746-5063, U.S.A.

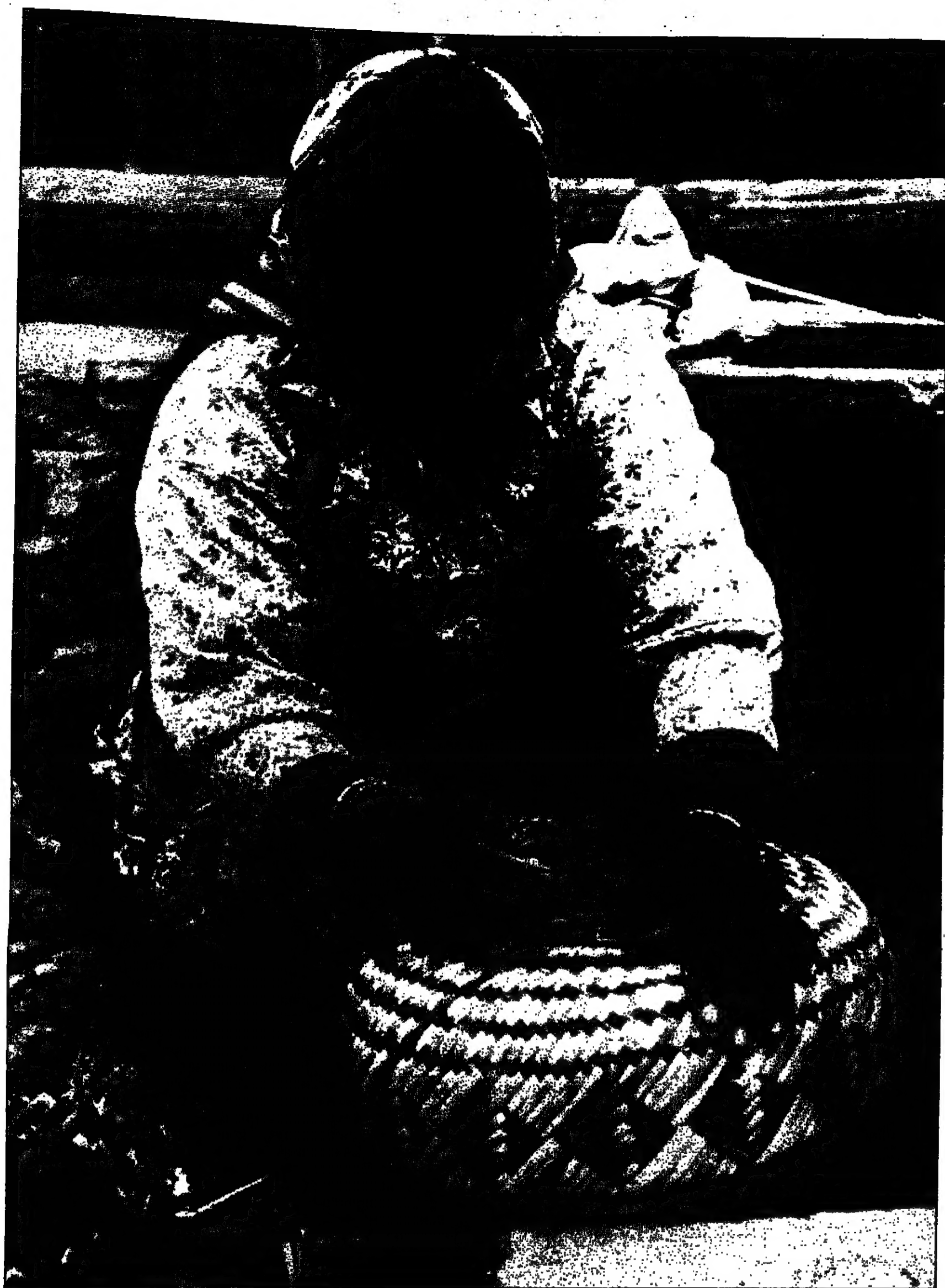
All prices, dates and itineraries are subject to change.

Information compiled by Alison Ashoon, Copley News Service.



View overlooking the Copper Canyon, near Divisadero.





Left: A Tarahumara Indian Woman demonstrates basket weaving.

Below: 350-year-old church in Satevo.

Bottom: Copper Canyon Cactus near Batopilas.

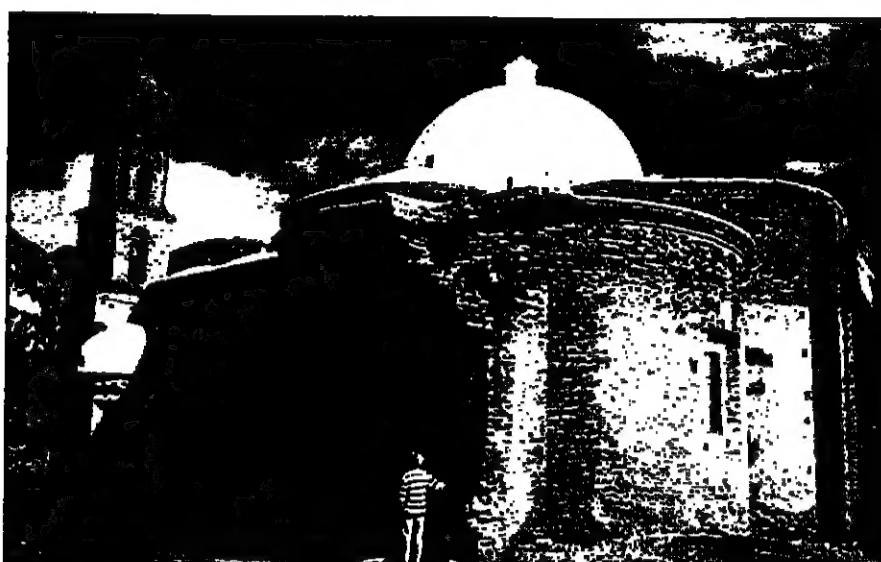


Photo by John Elkins



Photo by Susan Kaye

# A GRANDER CANYON

## Mexico's Copper Canyon Opens Window to Ancient Culture

By Susan Kaye

**B**ATOPILAS, Mexico—The Copper Canyon, in northwestern Mexico, exists in a time warp. Although the canyon is only a good day's drive from El Paso—paved roads all the way—being there is like discovering the Anasazi culture of the American Southwest, which disappeared in A.D. 1300. The shallow cave-homes and squat, one-room stone homes of 45,000 Tarahumaran Indians crisscross the canyon's rugged 5,000 square miles. No Tarahumarans live in the half-dozen or so villages that serve as supply and tourism centers. Not one has a car or truck. Not one has electricity. Astonishing? Absolutely. The region known to travelers as the Copper Canyon (Barrancas de Cobre) is properly called Sierra de Tarahumara; it straddles the northern spine of the Sierra Madre Occidental range, midway between the interior city of Chihuahua and the coastal city of Los Mochis. The Canyon is a dizzying network of five major canyons and more than a

dozen interconnecting ones. Together they are four times larger than Arizona's Grand Canyon.

Other than Jesuit missionaries and hordes of silver miners—both of whom converged in the early 1600s and are present to this day—few outsiders saw the vast canyon strongholds until rail tracks were completed in 1961.

Since then, a road has been cut from Chihuahua west, but it deadends halfway to Los Mochis.

Inaccessibility has always been the operative word.

"There's no question that the Indians are the highlight of the canyon," says Gary Ziegler, an American outfitter who has led backpacking groups to the canyon for more than 20 years. "Whereas at the Grand Canyon, the views are everything, in the Copper Canyon they're only part of the experience. The train is yet another facet. But the focus for me is experiencing a primitive culture that's very much alive."

On my first trip to the canyon seven years ago, I followed the standard itinerary, riding the Chihuahua-Pacífico train from Los Mochis and overnighing at inns along the route.

But that trip revolved around the train, which despite a first-class billing, has shabby interiors, grimy windows and no dining car. And it's a long ride—14 hours and 403 miles from Los Mochis at one end to Chihuahua at the other. The only Indians I encountered were ones selling handicrafts.

[Hurricane Ismael recently knocked down houses and telephone poles in Los Mochis but the worst damage was at Topolobampo, where many fishermen died when caught at sea.]

On my second visit I scheduled the majority of time on the rim of the canyon, in the uplands near Creel and at the canyon's floor in Batopilas.

First stop was the canyon's newest and plushiest hotel—the Mirador. A six-hour train ride from Los Mochis, it hugs the rim of what should have been declared a national park long ago. In the misty distance, three canyons converge, affording 100-mile panoramas that hold their own against the best: lofty plateaus abruptly plunge hundreds of feet into shuttered valleys and terraced plots where families toil on their scant half-acre of corn fields.

I walked narrow paths to visit two Tarahumara families, six of whom lived in a cramped, one-room home and eight of whom lived in a shallow cave. The women shyly and silently spread their wares: necklaces of red madrone seeds, small baskets woven from pine needles and larger ones plaited with bear grass.

Back on the train, I disembarked an hour later at Creel, a rough-and-tumble logging town. My destination was Sierra Lodge, 20 minutes away at Cusarare, where days were spent hiking and horseback riding past Indian villages.

After three days in the uplands, five other guests and I loaded into a van for a grueling 5-hour journey to the mining outpost of Batopilas, a one-street town, wedged between cliffs and river at the bottom of the canyon, that has yet to turn the calendar into the 20th century. Locals do errands on foot or horseback. Citywide electricity arrived in 1988, but forget about television, radios or phones.

The Riverside Lodge, though, is an oasis of

refinement. The 14-room hotel, which everyone calls the Hacienda, opened in 1992, restored over three years from a merchant's home. With private courtyards, murmuring fountains, Moorish arches and tiled domes, it's an intriguing pleasure maze.

One morning, before hiking to neighboring Satevo (population 18), I stopped by the home of Don Jesus, known as the best sandal-maker in the Sierra Madre. He's also the coffin-maker, which explains the narrow coffin straddling a saw-horse in front of his shop.

"Are you sure these sandals are just like the ones the Indians wear?" I asked him, as he threaded a leather thong through rubber soles, which, judg-

**...at the Grand Canyon, the views are everything. In the Copper Canyon they're only part of the experience.**

ing by the tread, had been cut from a tractor tire.

"With these huaraches, you'll run as fast as the wind," Don Jesus said, referring to the Tarahumaras' legendary prowess. It's said that when hunting a deer, they literally run it to death.

The next day (still preferring my sturdy hiking shoes to my \$15 sandals), I walked six miles toward the settlement of Cerro Colorado. I was overlooking a wide stream when what appeared to

be a 14-foot beam moved across the water.

Looking closer, I saw a Tarahumara was balancing the beam—sturdy enough to support a roof—on his left shoulder as he jumped from rock to rock. I later learned he'd been carrying it for two days to sell in town for \$10.

Within minutes, he approached, dressed in a spotless white loin cloth and a gathered yellow shirt. A wide blue headband held back his chin-length hair.

"Quira," I said, the Tarahumara greeting word.

He nodded, not pausing in his rapid gait despite the path's steep pitch. He carried nothing except the beam—no water, no day pack, no bedroll, and significantly, no food.

Thinking quickly, my companion said, "Please take a burrito with you," and placed it near the Indian's hand on the beam. Wordlessly, he accepted it and within a few seconds, disappeared up the trail.

On his feet were sandals like the ones Don Jesus made for me.

Although I still had two days left in the canyon, retracing my route by van and train to reach Los Mochis, I knew that nothing I would see or do would surpass this stunning encounter, when, for one moment I stood side-by-side with a man from another world and another time.

*Aspen-based Susan Kaye has made more than 30 trips to Mexico. In 1993 she was awarded the Mexican government's Pluma de Plata for her coverage of that country's destinations.*



# Stalking the Wild Travel Agent

by Mike Steere

Universal Press Syndicate

Easy sources of revenue, such as airline commissions, are shrinking like watering holes on Africa's Serengeti Plain in dry season. So America's 200,000-plus travel agents have been migrating to new pools of clients and money.

Some have chosen to specialize in particular countries, becoming certified experts on travel in, say, Australia. Others have gone for the chateau country of France. And a few bold individuals have made the long trip from general travel agent to consulting expert in adventure travel.

To meet the demand, agents' trade groups are gearing up to provide training and certification in adventure and ecotourism, to help establish agents' credibility in these specialties as well as bring in new business.

Whether, or when, this movement toward specialization will benefit large numbers of adventure travelers is debatable, even among professionals such as Chicago-based consultant Helen Nodland. She advises adventure companies on how to market through travel agents and gives seminars to agents on adventure travel.

As Nodland points out, agents—except for a handful of pioneers who became experts because of their own passions—are getting a very late start. Adventure travel "grew like toasty" for more than 20 years, but virtually none of the country's more than 30,000 travel agencies noticed or courted the adventuresome clientele.

Among the pioneers is Karen Killebrew, an aficionado of active travel in wild places. She built Escape Artist Travel in Oakland, California by matching clients with guided expeditions and custom overseas trips.

Killebrew says a well-informed agent can provide clients with a more critical, objective overview of similar trips offered by competing adventure companies, which is difficult for travelers to do on their own.

"It's very hard to tell from the catalog what an operator is going to produce," Killebrew says. Catalogs and other promotional materials have traditionally been adventurers' primary sources of information. Such publications are often gorgeous, but they are, by nature, self-serving and narrow. A phone follow-up can elicit more detail, but it's still the "company line."

Word-of-mouth from other travelers is also of limited use. A veteran of one trek in the Peruvian Andes can tell you a lot about that trip, but very little about how to compare it with other offerings, even by the same outfitter and certainly not about other outfitters.

A well-informed agent can help make such com-

parisons and better match individuals and companies, Killebrew says.

Such an agent can, moreover, provide industry "buzz"—insider knowledge about companies' reputations and rising and falling fortunes, which may affect travelers' experiences.

This new agent-adventurer alliance is a glimpse of what may be an adventure-shopper's mall, where an expert's wide experience and judgment can be brought into trip-planning. As the number of adventure offerings, options and outfitters selling them continues to grow, the whole business gets more confusing.

To help agents make sense of adventuring and ecotourism, professional organizations are opening schools. In August, the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), a suburban Washington, D.C., trade group, scheduled its first five-day certification program in adventure and ecotourism.

The Massachusetts-based Institute of Certified

Travel Agents (ICTA), known for its Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) program, is also preparing an adventure and ecotourism certification program, expected to be ready by the end of the year.

When adventure-specialist certificates start appearing on agents' walls, they may be encouraging signs for those seeking expert advice. A certificate will mean that the agent made an effort to learn the field in general, but not necessarily that he or she is an expert in your special interest, be it trekking in Central Asia, extreme white water rafting or rain-forest ecotourism.

An agent's personal experience and passion for a given specialty will outweigh official certification. As Nodland says, "If you're going to sell Africa, you'd better get your fanny over to Africa every year."

Adventuring is highly individualized, and so is the decision to trust and work with an adventure-minded travel agent.

Some doubt that a significant number of travel

agents will ever get a grip on adventure travel because it's so complex, with specialties within specialties and a reach into the world's most difficult and least-traveled areas.

Scott Sennake, marketing director of Wilderness Travel, says, "Trip logistics are very complicated. And to understand Africa or Patagonia or Nepal, you're asking an awful lot of agents."

But for every such doubter, there is a believer in a new agent-adventurer relationship, which will change how some travelers get their information and how companies reach clients.

"Adventure travel is what the skiing industry was years ago," says Susie Smyle, president of All Adventure Travel in Boulder, Colorado, which matches clients and the offerings of 100 companies.

Skiing was once the sole province of a few specialist agencies, unfamiliar territory to the rest, Smyle says. "Now agents fill ski packages every day."



Consultant Helen Nodland believes personal experience and passion are key elements for travel agents selling adventure trips.

## Homegrown Guides Nurture Ozark Ecotourism

by Marcia Schnedler

Universal Press Syndicate

Lon Kilgore shows her group of tourists a big button on a 24-inch-long loop of string, the kind of homemade toy this Arkansas Ozarks native played with while growing up in Newton County in the late 1930s and 1940s.

"We'd twist the buttons," Kilgore says. "Sometimes the boys would catch your hair and twist

it up, and then there'd be a fight."

Born in a log cabin in Parthenon, about six miles from the county seat of Jasper, Kilgore is a guide for Ozark Ecotours. She has taken us on a gently paced hike along rocky bluffs above the rugged Buffalo National River, and to the Parker-Hickman farm and home, built on hand-hewn logs in 1840 and lived in by the family until the late 1970s.

Along the way, she recalls gathering sassafras, birds' eggs and Mayapple roots. The sassafras was for tea, the eggs went into the family larder, and the roots were dried and sold, along with raccoon hides, in Harrison, 25 miles north.

At the Cherry Grove Cemetery, dating to pioneer times, Kilgore, 61, tells how small burial plots throughout the county were the sites of Decoration Day picnics that also served as family reunions—"dinner on the ground."

She and other Newton County natives, including Lester Villines, 67, and Vernon Rossmore, 78, take visitors to explore rock shelters used by Native Americans, settlers and outlaws, and hike into the forests where they played as children.

"Ecotourism," a buzzword in the travel industry, is the label for responsible travel that highlights and conserves the local culture and environment while it sustains and improves the economy.

In its true form, as practiced in Newton County, ecotourism is a style of vacationing close to the hearts of millions of America's 50-plus travelers. Some 97 percent of them indicated a concern about protecting the environment and natural habitats in a National Tour Association survey several years ago.

Newton County's fledgling ecotour operation is the only community-operated economic development effort in the United States and one of the few worldwide known to the Ecotourism Society. The society is an international organization of park managers, government officials, tour operators, conservation people and others.

The operation is particularly good for Newton County, where the average annual income of \$10,406 is the lowest in Arkansas. Its official unemployment rate of eight percent does not account for residents who have fallen through the statistical cracks.

**Travelers should be aware of ecotour impostors. Some claim to run trips sensitive to an area's culture and environment, but do not.**

It's also a county that stayed relatively isolated and without paved roads until the 1960s. The county never had a railroad, a radio and TV signals couldn't penetrate into its deep valleys. Life was a struggle in the difficult terrain, but at the same time people maintained their longstanding homespun culture.

Against this backdrop, the county's nonprofit Resource Development Council came into play. This grassroots organization, which has begun such services as an adult daycare center, decided in 1993 to develop ecotourism as part of a Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) project. The goal was to provide visitors an authentic experience of natural beauty and Ozark culture while stimulating the local economy.

Newton County residents, particularly those with low income, decided the context and routing of the tours, based on their background and expertise.

"I was already working with the resource council when the idea for ecotours came up," says Kilgore, whose Native American great-great-grandmother married the first white settler on the Little Buffalo River. "They asked for ideas, and all sorts of possibilities popped into my head, like the history of the outlaws in Newton County."

More than one-third of the 14 Ozark Ecotours guides have roots deep in the county's history and landscape. Others are relative newcomers, such as teacher and librarian Marti Olesen, who bases her tour on nature writers' views of the American wilderness.

Ecotourists are spending an additional \$53 per person during their New County visits—remarkable in light of the fact that the county's per capita annual retail expenditure is only \$750. The guides receive \$75 to \$100 per tour, which they welcome as supplementary income.

As young as they are, the ecotours are already stir-

ring up thoughts of new business development.

"I keep feeling like I ought to pass this along to my kids," Kilgore says. "Maybe I could go into a business myself and train my kids or train others."

Kilgore took her group to the tour's final stop, the old Erbe Church, where services were held until the U.S. government created parks from the land alongside the Buffalo National River.

"The church would have been used for singing conventions, and lessons and revivals," Kilgore says. She plays a tape recording of Eugene Villines, a relative of Lester's, and his family singing a touching version of "Amazing Grace."

"They're keeping up traditions," she says.

Increasing number of travel companies—particularly those specializing in natural history, culture and outdoor adventures—are striving to provide genuine ecotours. Nonprofit groups such as zoos and conservation organizations usually offer their members travel programs provided by such companies.

But travelers should be aware of ecotour impostors. Some claim to run trips sensitive to an area's culture and environment, but do not. The Ecotourism Society's "Responsible Travelers Fact Sheet" tells the kind of things to look for and questions to ask of a travel company to determine whether it is offering legitimate ecotours. For a free copy, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Responsible Travelers Fact Sheet, Ecotourism Society, P.O. Box 755, North Bennington, Vermont 05257.

For more information on Ozark Ecotours write P.O. Box 513, Jasper, Arkansas 72641, (501) 501/446-5898.

### TRAVELER

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## Read Fine Print to Unearth Bargains

By Chris Barnett

Copley News Service

Competition breeds bargains, and for the traveler bound for Bangkok, Bangor, or anywhere in between, now is the time to hunt for great deals.

The savings? Sometimes it can be a lot of money. In other cases, it's extra privileges, perks and lavish pampering. But now, with travelers gearing up for pre-holiday rush, read the fine print, quiz your travel agent and always ask everyone two questions:

"What's your absolute best rate?"

"What do I get for that price?"

The Pelham Hotel in London is a different story. You don't check in, you sign in on a vintage guest registry book as if you were staying at a quaint country inn. But the Pelham is a historic small luxury hotel with just 37 rooms and a full secretarial staff for the business traveler. The rate is \$160 a night for a single, about \$100 savings over London's bigger, better-known hostels. And the location couldn't be better—a few steps from Harrods—in Knightsbridge near great restaurants and shops.

It's rumored that Princess Diana herself stops at the Pelham every so often with her princely sons and a small entourage for tea, mainly because the photographers hang out at the Dorchester and Claridge's in their eternal quest for sighting—and snapping—the royals.

San Francisco is honeycombed with hotels, but rates can be steep. The Kimpton Group of smaller hotels has a largely unknown and unvarnished jewel called The Bedford at 761 Post. From now through March 1996, a deluxe room is priced at \$79 for one or two people, a full \$50 lower than the published regular rate. Still, there are no freebies.

However, Kimpton recently renovated and reopened the Sir Francis Drake Hotel near San Francisco's Union Square and is trying to woo customers. So the hotel has slashed its rates \$74 a night and is offering a bevy of bonuses to boot. For \$129 a night, you get free valet parking, a \$30 food and beverage credit in the Drake's Caffe Espresso or State's Bistro, a gratis "manager's wine reception" and \$50 credit for a return visit. That tops \$100 in savings right there. Or you can save \$51 on a deluxe room, still enjoy the wine reception and pay \$99 plus tax for the night. Other Kimpton hotels in San Francisco have similar dramatic deals.

In Bangkok, Thailand, the Shangri-La is passionately courting business travelers with an unusual "package," something normally offered vacationers. For \$170 a night, the traveler also gets breakfast, a welcome drink and a room overlooking the Chao Phraya River. Besides the extras, travelers stay on a private part of the hotel called the Krungthep Wing.

"We're really rolling out the red carpet these days in Asia," says Bob Hutchinson, senior vice president of marketing for Shangri-La. "In fact, you start saving the minute you walk in the front door."

Indeed, the hotel has cooked up a "Valued Guest Program," which is sort of like a frequent-flyer scheme.

Travelers staying, for example, at the Shangri-La in Hong Kong or across the harbor in Kowloon, can sign up and get a free line ride to and from Kai Tak Airport (normal price: \$50 each way), an automatic upgrade to the Executive Horizon Room, a full American breakfast (worth \$15 to \$30 depending on your appetite), free local calls, all long-distance calls and faxes without a surcharge and—here's the biggie—free laundry and dry cleaning.

In steamy Hong Kong, laundry and dry cleaning alone can run a small fortune at a hotel where \$7 to wash and iron a shirt is not uncommon. Room rates start at \$225 a night. Add up the hard dollar savings, and the out-of-pocket cost is less than \$100.

Plus, Shangri-La is opening a new line of hotels exclusively for business travelers priced 25 percent lower but equipped with business centers, health clubs and all the amenities one finds in a luxury hotel. The 543-room Traders Hotel in Singapore is offering rooms at 40 percent off as an introductory deal.

The only difference is that a Traders has smaller rooms and fewer restaurants," says Hutchinson.

Seven Traders will open in China alone by 1997.

Halfway around the world, in Bangor, Maine, the Phoenix Inn is a charming Victorian on West Market Square in the heart of downtown. Owner/manager Paul Johnson has reduced his rates to \$52.95, and that includes a Continental breakfast. A nicely furnished suite is only \$99.95. But here's where reading the fine print pays off: Johnson throws in free local phone calls, free parking and a complimentary vacation with the of the gear you would find at a friend's home.

Chris Barnett writes business travel strategies that save time and money.



Photo by Marcia Schnedler

Guide Lon Kilgore: "All kinds of ideas kept popping into my head, like the history of the outlaws in Newton County."



# Burma's Jewish remnant

ROBERT HORN  
RANGOON

**M**oses Samuels unlocks the doors of Burma's last synagogue only when he's sure his visitor is Jewish.

Halacha does not bar non-believers from synagogues. Dozens of Moslem traders from the teeming street outside turned up at the synagogue gates to offer condolences when prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated.

But as Samuels steps into the silent, empty Musmeah Yeshua synagogue, he explains why his Moslem neighbors are rarely allowed inside.

"I don't want this to be a museum," says Musmeah Yeshua's sole trustee. "I want it to be alive as a house of worship."

It's a hard task. Only eight Jewish families, about 40 people, are left in Burma, and most live outside Rangoon. Frequently, there isn't a minyan.

So Musmeah Yeshua, just a stone's throw from the Buddhist Sale Pagoda, often sits vacant amid Hindu temples and Moslem mosques, an aging monument to a dwindling community in one of the world's most isolated countries.

It wasn't always that way.

There were once 2,500 Jews in Burma. Traders and merchants from the Middle East and Europe, they started migrating here in the early 1800s. Sometime between 1877 and 1896, they built the synagogue.

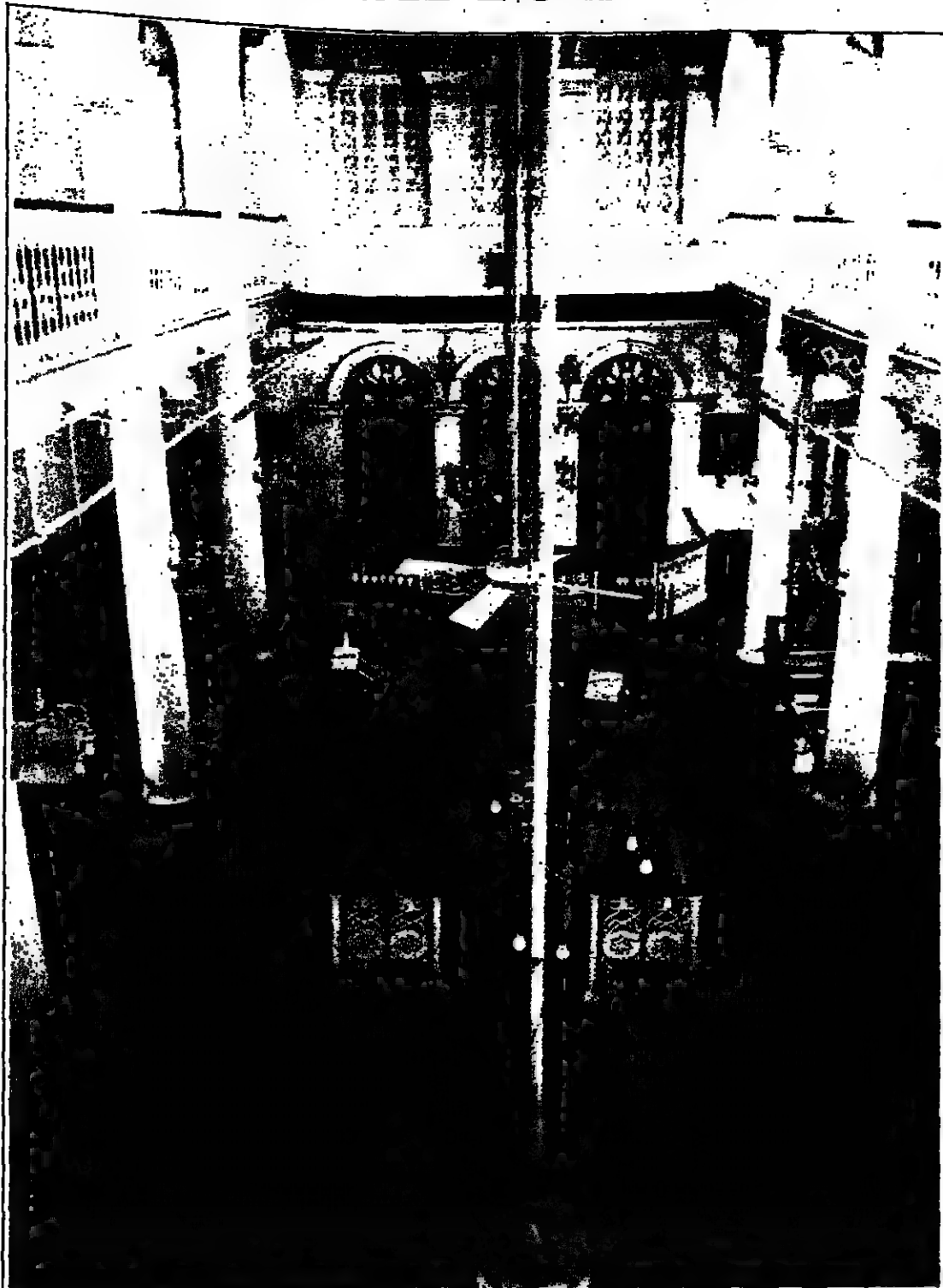
Many Jews left during the Japanese occupation in World War II. More followed after the Burmese army seized power in 1962. Most lost their livelihoods as the military strongman Ne Win, who ruled for 26 years, nationalized industries and wrecked the economy.

The last rabbi left in 1975. Samuels' father, Isaac, who came to Burma from England in the 1920s, was elected trustee of the synagogue. He died in 1978, and caring for Musmeah Yeshua fell to Samuels, now 46.

Until then Samuels had not paid much attention to his religious schooling. While he can speak Burmese, Urdu and English, he cannot speak Hebrew.

"I want to learn, but there is no one left to teach me," he says. With no rabbi to school them in their own religion, Burma's Jews conduct their infrequent services in English, unless the Israeli ambassador shows up to lead them.

The congregation is poor and the synagogue's upkeep relies on donations from foreign visitors, overseas relatives of Jews who once lived in Burma and interna-



The interior of Burma's last synagogue, a monument to a dwindling community. (R. Malt)

tional Jewish organizations.

In a field on the far side of town, Samuels runs his hand over the cool, white stone of his father's tomb and wonders if it will be the last time.

The Jewish cemetery has more than 300 mold-streaked, crumbling tombstones, the oldest dated 1896. But the palm-tree-lined graveyard sits on land that the Burmese government wants to start developing into a shopping mall.

Samuels doesn't think he can stop them.

"They say there are no more Jews, so we don't need a cem-

tery," Samuels says. He fears his ancestors' remains will be desecrated if they are moved.

"It is a sad thing," says Aung Kywe, a Buddhist friend of Samuels' father who helps with paperwork and legal advice. "Our relationship with the government has always been good."

It is their relationship with their Moslem neighbors. Three years ago when Samuels' son Sammy had his bar mitzva, more than 500 people from the neighborhood came in to Musmeah Yeshua after the ceremony to celebrate with the family.

Except for the synagogue's

centennial, which the congregation has decided to mark in 1996, celebrations are rare.

Mostly Samuels waits for the occasional visitor, and answers letters from Jews overseas who want information about ancestors who once lived in Rangoon.

Poring over records inside a folder marked "aliya" Samuels talks about how, if he had any money, he would like to visit the "Promised Land."

But it would only be a visit. "I am Burmese," he says. "If I leave, who will take care of the temple?"

(Associated Press)

# AMIT celebrates 70 years of learning

Officials of  
AMIT speak to  
Judith  
Sudilovsky as  
they mark a  
milestone  
anniversary

**A**MIT bus driver Ya'acov Ben-Shimon whips out a picture of his teenage son and his unofficial foster daughter from his wallet. Inbal, the smiling, curly-haired girl in the picture, is now a medic in the army. Ben-Shimon says proudly.

When she was 11 years old Inbal was part of the external program of AMIT's Beit Hayeled children's home in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood. Every afternoon, Ben-Shimon would take her home, and he noticed that she returned to an empty house.

After a while, instead of leaving her there alone, he offered to take her back to his home, where she stayed with his wife and children, and her parents would pick her up in the evening. But her parents began coming later and later. Finally, Inbal started sleeping at the Ben-Shimons' house, and by agreement with the family and AMIT, the Ben-Shimons became her surrogate family.

It was Ben-Shimon and his wife who saw her off when she entered the army, and, though she is still in touch with her own family, it is to their home that she returns when she has leave.

Ben-Shimon is an example of the dedication AMIT employees feel towards their work and their young charges. It is a commitment which starts in the office of AMIT director-general Dr. Ami Ze'evi and works its way through the hundreds of teachers, counselors and other employees at the 32 AMIT educational institutions.

AMIT, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, was founded in 1925 by Beale Gotsfeld as the Mizrahi Women's Organization of America, and was at first an auxiliary women's movement to the men's Mizrahi organization. In 1933, it opened its first school.

About 10 years ago the name was changed to AMIT, so that it would not be confused with the institutions affiliated with the National Religious Party.

AMIT, Ze'evi insists, is completely apolitical and its sole purpose is to provide religious Zionist education.

"More and more there is a need for what we do. This is the future. We are on the right track to help develop these young people to be capable of bringing Israel into the year 2000," says Shoshana Rick, chairwoman of the Israel Executive Board of AMIT.

Likud MK Meir Sheerit is an AMIT graduate, as is Knesset spokeswoman Sara Yitzhaki, she

points out.

The AMIT network has grown from its five original institutions, that were dedicated to providing basic vocational training for young Holocaust survivors and other refugees and immigrants, and is now the Education Ministry's official network for religious secondary technological education. The schools offer courses in electronics, computer and biotechnology, music, and fashion, as well as academic subjects.

The network includes high schools that conduct joint programs with universities, high schools in development towns, and junior colleges, such as a pre-army yeshiva program in Safed.

AMIT recently began working with elementary schools, to provide a religious-Zionist educational framework from kindergarten through 12th grade.

"The AMIT network believes in a moderate, tolerant religious Zionism and works in all areas of religious-Zionist education and at all socio-economic levels," Ze'evi says.

"In each school we try to provide the type of education that the parents request. In some schools the parents request a more strict religious curriculum and at other places, such as Dror Elementary School in Jerusalem, they want more open education."

Recently, AMIT has been criticized for not working with schools over the Green Line, but Ze'evi says that until recently AMIT has never been contacted by a school from that area. AMIT has just begun negotiating with four settlements.

"We do not discriminate between different areas in the country, not within or outside of the Green Line," Ze'evi says. "They are all equal. We use the same criteria in all areas."

When Ze'evi was appointed AMIT's director-general in Israel, his goal was to provide religious vocational schools so that

religious pupils who wanted a technical education would not be forced to go to secular schools.

"At that time, AMIT in the United States saw as their mission to work with the underprivileged," he says. "I said that their role was to provide an answer to religious-Zionist education in general, without hurting the work AMIT was doing for the underprivileged."

Not all pupils who attend AMIT schools are religious or underprivileged, but all must abide by certain regulations — such as wearing kippot and dressing modestly — while at school.

One of AMIT's biggest achievements is the increase in the percentage of its pupils earning a matriculation (*bagrut*) certificate.

In 1991, only 22 percent of pupils at the AMIT school in Acre received their *bagrut* certificate, but by 1994, after a new program that involved intensive tutoring was implemented, the number had jumped to 66 percent. This program had a similar effect at other AMIT schools.

In recent years, AMIT officials, who were becoming alarmed by the growing extremist tendencies in certain sectors of the religious-Zionist community, began speaking out against this trend, Ze'evi says.

After the murder of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, AMIT put together a pamphlet of speeches by rabbis and religious commentators that call for moderation and acceptance of those who have different opinions.

Many of the extra programs provided by AMIT schools rely on donations from the American chapters of AMIT, Ze'evi says, so the difficult economic situation there has also affected the ability of AMIT in Israel to provide services.

"I would like to see AMIT grow and include more schools, to spread the real spirit of religious Zionism, but the problem is financial," Ze'evi says.

"The ideals of the Land of Israel, the People of Israel and the Torah of Israel are still as true today as they were 70 years ago," says Devorah Masovetsky, who in 1948 was the organization's fourth president.

"We have grown a great deal and younger women are coming into the organization. We have things to be proud of but this 70th anniversary doesn't mean that we can or will sit back and glory in our achievements. As the needs grow here, we will answer them."

# Deceitful woman is less-than-wonderful cure for lovesickness

DEAR RUTHIE  
RUTHIE BLUM

Dear Ruthie,  
I met a wonderful woman at a conference abroad. She and I were among the few Israelis there, and we hit it off right away. We ended up spending the last two nights together. After returning, I called her and she was very formal on the phone. It turns out that she is married.

I was hurt that she hadn't mentioned this when we were together. When she phoned me the following day to arrange a tryst, I know I should have declined. But weakness (or lovesickness) got the better of me. How should I proceed?

Poor Player of Second Fiddle  
Somewhere in Israel

Dear Poor No. 2 Fiddler,  
You seem to know how to proceed. You just don't wish to opt for something which entails forfeiting something else. In this respect, you are typically human. Whatever else you know or feel about this "wonderful" woman, one thing is clear: she is

deceitful. You know of two men to whom she has lied. You know of one to whom she has been unfaithful. If weakness continues to get the better of you, at least try to find out where she stands. Though this may not make a difference in your attitude, it may assist you to make an actual choice. Right now, you are only succumbing to circumstance ... and to lovesickness.

Dear Ruthie,  
My mother-in-law has a way of dominating everyone she's close to. My children (19, 17 and 12) make no decision without consulting their grandmother. On one hand, I think it's positive that they are so close to her. On the other, I often question her judgment and motives. I have never interfered, however.

Lately, she has been pressuring my middle daughter on a particular issue which I feel could be detrimental to my daughter. I am fearful of confronting this powerhouse of a woman, but am worried about my daughter's future. What can I do?

Fearful But Firm  
Beersheba

Dear F but F,  
The issue here seems to have more to do with your relationship with your daughter than with confronting your mother-in-law. Perhaps not interfering suited you in some way. If it no longer suits you, don't let lack of confidence in your ability to withstand the wrath of the "powerhouse" come between you and your child.

If you are worried about grandma's guidance in this case, it is your duty to provide an alternative view. For all you know, your daughter has been hungering for your "interference" her whole life. Whatever the outcome, at least you will know that you didn't sit back and allow fear of your mother-in-law to dictate your motherhood.

Dear Ruthie,  
My mother is a social worker and my father is a psychologist. I am an only child, and the only person whose problems they have no time to listen to. This is why I am writing to you.

Now in my last year of university, I have become more and more unhappy with my field. Sometimes I think it's just the blues.

Other times I wish to quit school and take a year or so to think things through.

My parents hand me a lot of psycho-babble whenever this comes up. They say I have to examine my inner self or offer to pay for therapy. I'd appreciate it if you would do neither.

Out-of-Sorts Student  
Tel Aviv

Dear Out of Sorts,  
Relax. I don't earn enough to pay for your therapy, and my psycho-babble is rusty. I do suggest taking a deep breath and com-

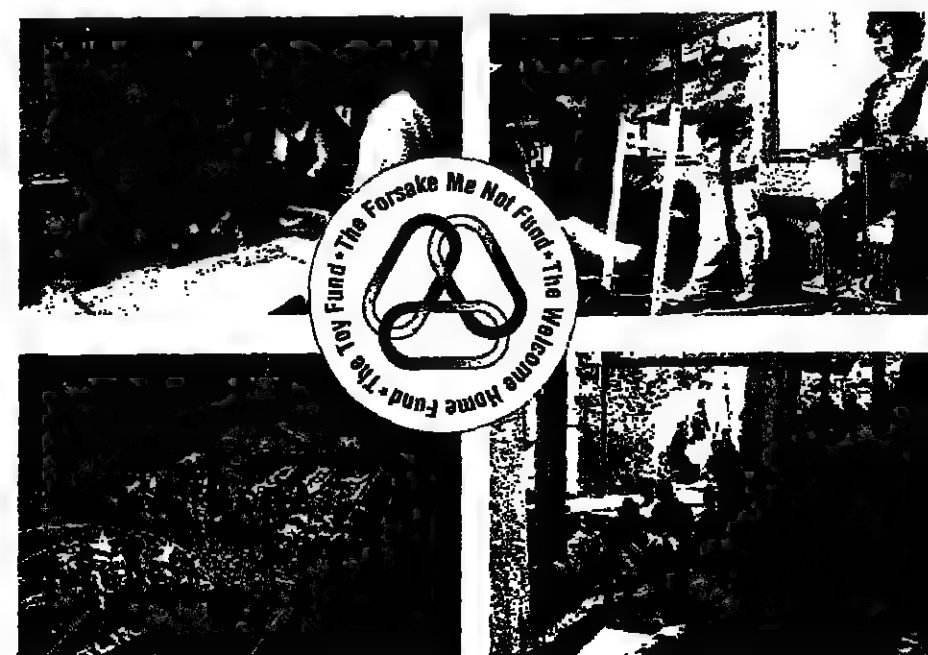
pleting this final stretch of your studies. Then, if "blues" or dissatisfaction still finger, you can take time to figure out what does interest you.

At least this way, you will have your whole life to change directions — and a degree to boot.

Letters should be addressed to:

# Let's start making next year better now!

Last year The Jerusalem Post Funds young Israelis completing military service. Starting at Rosh Hashana we will be opening this year's campaign as granting scholarships for higher education to new immigrants and young and old.



Donations should be sent to The Jerusalem Post Funds, P.O.B. 81, Jerusalem 91000. All contributions in Israel in Shekels are tax deductible. Donors in the U.S. wishing to receive tax benefits can mail their checks to: Friends of The Jerusalem Post Funds, 211 E43rd St, New York, NY 10017. Checks should be made out to Friends of The Jerusalem Post Funds.

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## BUSINESS &amp; FINANCE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1995

Agricultural  
profits up  
last two years

THE profitability of the agricultural sector has risen over the past two years, after dropping for a decade. According to the Bank of Israel, profitability rose by 12 percent in 1994 and by a similar amount in 1995.

The change in fortune is attributed to changes in agricultural policy, including grants and investments, which the Agriculture Ministry made to help ensure the stability of the sector.

Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tzur announced the turnaround at a press conference yesterday, summing up the first 11 months of the year's activity.

One change he noted was the difference in vegetable prices: a year ago fresh produce rose in price by 22%; this year the increase was only 1.7%. Tzur said agricultural exports are expected to reach \$700 million this year, up from about \$594m. in 1994.

Among the contributing factors to this growth he cited citrus exports, which grew by 49.6%. Other fruit exports grew by 26.4%, the strongest component of which was avocados (up 40%).

The increase in vegetable exports was led by potatoes, up 17.2%, while flower and plant exports rose 12%. (Itim)

'Freeze public-sector hiring'  
Propper: Trade deficit up to \$10 billion

MANUFACTURERS Association president Dan Propper called on the government to freeze all hiring in the public sector yesterday, saying such a move would save the budget \$15 billion over the next two fiscal years.

Industry, currently on the lookout for skilled or educated workers, would absorb ex-public sector workers, he said, adding that the industrial sector's greatest achievement of the past two years was a successful absorption of immigrants in numbers "far beyond our proportional size."

Speaking to the press in Tel Aviv, Propper summed up the year's economic activity, which he said was highlighted by the growth in the national trade deficit to \$10 billion in 1995 from \$7.3b. in 1994.

However, the 1995 gross national product also rose at the same time, climbing 6.8%, com-

RACHEL NEIMAN

pared with 6.5% in 1994. Israel's civilian import surplus went up to \$9.5b. from \$7.9b. in 1994. The balance of payment deficit increased to \$3.5b. from \$2.5b.

The unemployment rate decreased to 6.5% from 7.8%. Private sector wages increased 1.5%, as compared with a 0.4% drop in 1994.

Public sector wages increased 6.5%, as compared with 7.8% the year before. The rate of inflation slowed to 7.8% from 14.5%.

Although industrial growth was a rapid 8%, "we want to see growth based on increased export," said Propper. "But export growth, instead of last year's 11.5% [at 7.8%], grew only 3.7%."

Propper had more dire predic-

tions for the new year.

"If the government and the Bank of Israel do nothing to reduce the deficit, we are due for a shocking blow," he said, outlining a scenario in which between \$5b. and \$6b. in savings would be withdrawn from the nation's banks by individuals, anticipating a devaluation on the eve of the 1996 elections.

Propper called for an immediate 1% lowering of interest rates. Rapid growth was experienced only in construction and related industries and the tourism sector. Electronics and defense industries were down, he pointed out, due mostly to exchange rates which lagged behind inflation.

Proposed cuts in the national budget "meant to lower activity in the business sector [instead] affect private individuals, foreign currency and increase inflation," he said.

'Infighting  
causes poor  
mark against  
car thefts

RACHEL NEIMAN

POLITICAL infighting among cabinet ministers is the main reason for the poor handling of car theft, Cial Insurance general manager Rimona Ben-Shaul told the Israel Center for Management yesterday.

"There is no problem in handling car theft, but the matter demands legislative changes and coordinated government policy," said Ben-Shaul, who added that arguments between ministries and special committee members prevented any coordination between their offices.

Ben-Shaul, who is also chairman of the Insurance Agents Association, suggested handling car thefts like in other countries, such as Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

"The matter must be handled at the demand source, that is to say dealers, not the thieves themselves," he said.

Ben-Shaul further suggested dispatching a 500-man strong police squad dealing primarily in intelligence, passage of a law requiring all parts of any dismantled car to be marked and entered in a national data base, and increased coordination between the Police, Interior, Treasury and Justice ministries.

"If [Police Minister Moshe] Shabai's suggestion for forbidding trade in used car parts for a three-year period is approved, insurance rates will rise 7%," Ben-Shaul pointed out.

Despite the rise in car thefts, the 1995 fourth quarter was a good one for insurance firms.

"Results will show improvement in general insurance and stability of up to 10% growth in life insurance."

Car theft, he said, would cause losses of some NIS 500m. to the sector overall.

He also announced that Cial Insurance will launch a direct line for claims and assessments, eliminating the chain of insurance salesmen, assessors and mechanics profiting from accidents.

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ISRAEL IN  
THE PINK

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

**Joint mapping project finalized:** The Israel Electric Corporation, the Tel Aviv Municipality and Bezeq yesterday finalized a joint mapping project which will enable full coordination in infrastructure work. The Geographic Information System (GIS) will cover a 50,000-dman area. Estimated cost for the Tel Aviv area is NIS 1 million and will take three years to complete. Total cost for the national GIS is \$16.5m. and will take seven years to complete. *Rachel Neiman*

**Office Depot, Super Office offer 'door busters':** Both Office Depot and Super Office have been making much of the year's end, offering so-called "door busters," reducing prices on select items by between 20 percent and 40%. Super Office has even set up a hot line which will take orders up to 10:00 p.m. on December 31. *Rachel Neiman*

**DAF signs deal with PA:** The Palestinian Authority's public transport division has signed a NIS 50 million deal with Dutch truck manufacturer DAF. The PA will purchase 75 DAF intercity buses with chassis manufactured by Den Ouden. Delivery is due to be completed by August. *Rachel Neiman*

**Court dismisses claims against New Dimension Software:** The Tel Aviv District Court has dismissed claims filed by former CEO Yossi Hollander against New Dimension Software (formerly 4th Dimension), the company has announced.

Hollander said the current board of directors was not validly constituted and thus its resolutions - including his own removal on November 10, 1994 - were invalid. Hollander is a major shareholder in the company.

Current CEO Roni Einav said the company was pleased with the decision. The court also ruled that Eliyahu Levin, who was appointed by the court as an additional board member on February 27, 1995, should remain. *Rachel Neiman*

**The Shmeltzer-Fogel group announced yesterday it is in advanced negotiations with a subsidiary of Mashav Projects and Development concerning the sale of controlling interest, or 36%, of Gold Bond (Chaman Paper Converting Industry). Mashav is a member of the Koor group.** *Rachel Neiman*

**Africa-Israel Hotels announced yesterday the merger of Jordan Hotels, Tiberias Hot Springs and Africa Israel Hotels and Resorts.** *Rachel Neiman*

**Formula Systems subsidiary Wizec will install and support the Australian telecom provider with its Wizard cable TV subscription management and billing product. The NIS 10m. contract is divided between annual maintenance fees and user fees. Wizec will receive a first payment of NIS 4.5m. in cash.** *Rachel Neiman*

**First International Bank has won the Airport Authority contract to operate branches at six border crossings: Jordan River (Sheik Hussein), Allenby Bridge, Arava, Rafiah, Taba and the Haifa Airport.** *Rachel Neiman*

## ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

**Patish (foreign currency deposit rates) (28.12.95)**

Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.500	4.500	4.500
Pound sterling (£100,000)	2.375	2.250	2.375
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.500	0.500	0.500
Yen (10 million yen)			

(Rates vary higher or lower from indicated according to deposit)

## Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates\* (27.12.95)

Currency	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	3.5250	3.5225	3.5250	3.5225	3.5250	3.5225
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	3.5250	3.5225	3.5250	3.5225	3.5250	3.5225
Pound sterling	4.8320	4.8304	4.8320	4.8304	4.8320	4.8304
French franc	0.0354	0.0357	0.0354	0.0357	0.0354	0.0357
Japanese yen (100)	3.0400	3.0397	3.0400	3.0397	3.0400	3.0397
Dutch guilder	1.9450	1.9474	1.9450	1.9474	1.9450	1.9474
Swedish krona	0.4704	0.4708	0.4704	0.4708	0.4704	0.4708
Norwegian krona	0.4936	0.5018	0.4936	0.5018	0.4936	0.5018
Denmark krone	0.5827	0.5718	0.5827	0.5718	0.5827	0.5718
French mark	0.7194	0.7200	0.7194	0.7200	0.7194	0.7200
Canadian dollar	2.2944	2.2915	2.2944	2.2915	2.2944	2.2915
Australian dollar	2.2218	2.2303	2.2218	2.2303	2.2218	2.2303
S. African rand	0.8545	0.8593	0.8545	0.8593	0.8545	0.8593
Belgian franc (10)	1.0777	1.0775	1.0777	1.0775	1.0777	1.0775
Austrian schilling (10)	3.0993	3.1483	3.0993	3.1483	3.0993	3.1483
Italian lire (1000)	1.8758	1.8984	1.8758	1.8984	1.8758	1.8984
Jordanian dinar						
Egyptian pound						
ECU	3.9545	4.0588	3.9545	4.0588	3.9545	4.0588
Irish punt	5.0165	5.0253	5.0165	5.0253	5.0165	5.0253
Spanish peseta (100)	2.5555	2.5594	2.5555	2.5594	2.5555	2.5594

\* These rates vary according to bank. \*\* Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

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The Fund is an "Open Fund" as defined by the Joint Investments Trust Law: 5754-1994 (in this Prospectus - "the Law").

## Offering of Units to Foreign Residents\* Only.

Under Section 31 (b) (2) of the law, the following is a statement concerning the publication of a Prospectus, which contains: Offering of Units to Foreign Residents\* Only

An unlimited number of registered Fund units of a nominal value of one U.S. dollar (hereinafter - "dollar") are offered at the unit price plus an increment of 1% or less, as detailed in Chapter A of this Prospectus.

The said units are being offered commencing 28 December 1995 until 27 December 1996, and will, subject as provided in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Chapter A of the Prospectus be sold on those days when trading takes place in Israel and abroad as defined in paragraph 1 (a) of chapter A of the Prospectus.

Payment for the units shall be made only in dollars out of a non-resident foreign currency deposit account of a foreign resident.

## The Fund's Investment Policy and transactions for the Fund (see Chapter F of the Prospectus)

## 1. The Fund Agreement provides that:

(a) At least 30% of the net value of the Fund assets will be all or any of the assets set out below: bonds and loans of any class. Notwithstanding this, an investment at a lower rate than that mentioned for a period not exceeding two trading days will not be considered a deviation from such rate.

(b) The provisions of subclause (a) of this clause may be varied by amending the Fund Agreement without requiring the sanction of the unit holders in general meeting.

(c) Subject as provided above, to the provision contained in paragraph 3(f) of Chapter F of the Prospectus and the provisions of any law, the Fund Manager may invest the Fund's resources at his absolute discretion and is also empowered to fix the cash amount to be included in the Fund's assets from time to time.

2. Unless otherwise resolved by the Board of Directors of the Fund Manager, at least 50% of the net value of the Fund assets will be all or any of the assets set out below: bonds and loans of any class. Notwithstanding this, an investment at a lower rate than that mentioned for a period not exceeding two trading days will not be considered a deviation from such rate.

3. The Fund Manager may purchase for the Fund foreign securities and options traded abroad (in the Prospectus called: "foreign options") at a rate not exceeding 75% of the net value of the Fund assets, provided the investment in options will not exceed the rate mentioned in paragraph 4 hereof. The Fund Manager does not undertake to invest a specific rate of the Fund assets in foreign securities.

4. The value of options held by the Fund, apart from Maof (CALL 1 Options) options, is not to exceed 10% of the net value of the Fund assets, and the value thereof, together with the value of option warrants held in the Fund shall not exceed 20% of the net value of the Fund assets (see also paragraph 3(b) of Chapter F of the Prospectus). Details concerning the nature of the options and risks involved in investing and writing options are set out in paragraph 1(c) of this Chapter below.

## 5. The Fund Manager may, subject to the provisions of law, carry out the following transactions:

(a) The purchase, sale and writing of options and futures contracts.

(b) Effecting a sale "short".

(c) Lending or signing a lending agreement of securities, for the purpose of a sale transaction effected "short" provided it is not for another fund managed by it.

## Transactions and Commitments for the Fund

The Fund Agreement provides that the Trust Manager may, without the sanction of a meeting of unit holders, effect any transaction and undertake any commitment for the Fund (apart from increasing the Fund Manager's and Trustee's remuneration) which are not prohibited by the Fund Agreement, provided that such act may be effected and commitment undertaken by law, as the case may be, without the approval of such a meeting.

## The Fund's Major Investments in the year ended 30.9.1995

The average major investments of the Fund (according to holdings at the end of each month)

in the year ended 30.9.95 was as follows:

	as a % of net value of Fund's assets
Foreign bonds	70
Foreign currency linked government bonds	11
Shares traded in Israel	4
Cash in foreign currency	9
Data concerning the yield of the Fund's Units in correlation to the changes in various indices:	

Yield of Fund's units calculated as based on redemption prices, as published in Stock Exchange's list in Dollar terms

	Rate of Increase/Decrease during the period	in %
Index of bonds traded in or linked to foreign currency	1.10.94 - 30.9.95	-4.10
Consumer Price Index (as per the index relating to the last month of each period)	29.12.93 (date of launch of Fund) - 30.9.94	7.30
Representative rate of exchange of the \$		10.53
		0.97

## Validity of Permit of the Controller of Foreign Currency for operating the Fund

The validity of the Permit of the Foreign Currency Controller for operating the Fund appearing in appendix F to this Prospectus, will expire on 31 December 1998 unless extended prior to its expiration.

## Cumulative Fund (See Chapter N of the Prospectus)

Unless otherwise decided by the board of directors of the Fund Manager, the Fund will be cumulative and no payment will be made to the unit holders by the Fund Manager.

## "Unrestricted Fund"

The Fund is an "unrestricted Fund". Details of the tax provisions applicable to an unrestricted fund are set out in section 5 of Chapter O of the Prospectus, under the heading "Taxation".

## Annual Fees of Fund Manager and Trustee (see Chapter J of this Prospectus)

Under the Fund Agreement, the Fund Manager is entitled to receive an annual fee equivalent to 4% of the average annual value of the Fund's assets calculated for the purpose of determining the unit price, but unless otherwise decided by the Fund Manager, it will receive an annual fee equal to 1.5% of the aforementioned value.

The Trustee is entitled, under the Fund Agreement, to receive, and receives, an annual fee equal to 0.2% of the aforementioned value.

## Expressions used in the Prospectus

Expressions used in the Law and in the regulations made thereafter, will bear the same meaning when used in this Prospectus, save where the context otherwise requires.

## English Translation

The Hebrew version of the Fund Agreement, certificates of participation in the Fund and of the Prospectus are the exclusively binding text. The translator of the Prospectus has certified that the English translation of the prospectus is a faithful translation of the Hebrew original (the certificate appears in appendix I of the Prospectus).

Requests for Fund units will be submitted to the Fund Manager by the central operators department of Bank Leumi le-Israel, B.M., at 4 Lilienblum Street, Tel Aviv, and the members of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. A copy of the prospectus and copies of the permits for its publication have been submitted to the Registrar of Companies. Copies of the prospectus can be acquired at any Bank Leumi le-Israel branch, and from security agents who are members of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

Tel Aviv: 5 Tevet, 5756 28 December 1995.

The Trustee: Kesselman & Kesselman Trust Co. (1971) Ltd.

\* In this Prospectus: "Foreign Resident" is as defined in the Currency Control Law 5738-1978, and in the Currency Control Permit 5738-1978 as set out in Appendix E hereof. Under the said Currency Control Permit (section: "Validity of Permit of Controller of Foreign Currency to operate the Fund). Israeli residents (including holders of an exception) are not entitled to acquire units of this Fund.

LEUMI PIA



## Two-sided trading











# Burg denies report he'll run on Labor ticket

JEWISH AGENCY Chairman Avraham Burg yesterday denied that he had intentions of leaving the agency "in the next few years."

"I do not have any wish or any intention to change the path I have chosen for the next few years - that of the Jewish Agency, the Jewish people and other issues connected with them," Burg said categorically.

He added that there were still numerous reforms that he had to carry out.

"I am not even planning to run in the upcoming primaries" in the Labor Party, he told *The Jerusalem Post*.

Burg was commenting on a report in yesterday's *Ha'aretz* quoting him as saying that he expected to leave the agency and join the next government as a minister if

BATSHEVA TSUR

Shimon Peres wins the elections next year.

Peres is interested in running with a young team to counteract the effect his age will have on the voters when running against Benjamin Netanyahu, Burg reportedly told *Ha'aretz*.

That makes him as well as Haim Ramon and Ehud Barak

natural candidates, according to the report, which quoted Burg as saying: "I'll be the first candidate from outside [the current government] whom Peres will call upon to join the cabinet."

But Burg said yesterday: "Those are simply baseless rumors and nothing else. That is why I am not running in the

primaries. "I am not a candidate for any other position, not from my point of view and not on behalf of anyone else."

An aide said that "background remarks" made by Burg had been taken out of context by *Ha'aretz*.

Later Burg issued a similar denial at a closed meeting of the World Zionist Organization's Settlements Division.

But a senior agency official said that it was obvious that Burg, as a young politician, would not want to remain in the Jewish Agency forever.

"Clearly he is setting his sights higher - but not for the moment," he said.

Burg left yesterday evening for Moscow where he will attend a meeting of emissaries in the CIS. He is expected back tomorrow.

## Mordechai: I only considered Likud

SARAH HONIG

THE talks with Syria beginning in Washington will be "a crucial battle that will decide Israel's future and long-term ability to survive," Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yitzhak Mordechai said yesterday.

"Having taken part in many a decisive, life or death battle, battles which shaped the nation's future, I felt that I cannot opt out now and not participate in the coming fight as well," said Mordechai, explaining his decision to join the Likud and run in its March primaries to the press.

Israel, he said, "is now at one of the most dangerous crossroads at which the country has ever stood. We all hope and pray for peace ... But we also want a peace that will be a secure one."

Mordechai, a former OC Northern Command, argued that "the Golan Heights are a strategically vital area, one for which no security arrangements of any sort can constitute an adequate alternative."

"There is just no way to receive the intelligence and the early warning that we can have by being on the heights ... Our deployment there enables us to deal with any threat and it is also crucial to securing water resources for the entire State of Israel ... Most of all, no one can guarantee that conditions in Syria will not change and make any and all arrangements worthless."

He maintained that he had always been "true to his beliefs and had never so much as considered a political future with any other party but the Likud."

Mordechai was avidly courted by a number of parties. One of Prime Minister Shimon Peres's first moves after taking over from Yitzhak Rabin was to invite Mordechai for a talk in an effort to convince him to opt for Labor.

Mordechai was also wooed by his long-time friend MK David Levy. Yesterday he appealed to Levy to return to the Likud.



Yitzhak Mordechai meets the press yesterday. (Ilan Ossandryver/Israel Sun)

## 'Al-Quds' editor remains in Jericho jail

BILL HUTMAN

PALESTINIAN Preventive Security chief Jibril Rajoub refused to release *Al-Quds* editor Maher Alameh yesterday, saying he was arrested by order of PA Chairman Yasser Arafat, who had yet to say he should be released, according to Palestinian sources.

"This is not very encouraging for freedom of the press," said *Al-Quds* owner Marwan Abu Zalat.

Zalat said he would appeal directly to Arafat, who returned yesterday from a trip abroad.

Alameh was kidnapped to Jericho Monday after Arafat became angry at his not putting a Christmas story portraying him in a positive light on the newspaper's front page, according to the sources.

He has been allowed a short meeting with his wife, but other

visitors have been turned away.

Members of the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders were among those who were told by Preventive Security agents in Jericho they could not meet with Alameh, said the group's Palestinian representative, Bassam Eid.

"Arafat is making a total mockery of the idea of freedom of the press," Eid said.

The sources said Arafat originally wanted the paper shut down because of the Christmas story and several others, but was convinced this was unwise.

*Al-Quds*, the most widely distributed Arabic newspaper in the region, was closed for several days by Arafat earlier this year.

"It is important that this time we get to the bottom of this, so that this sort of action does not continue," Zalat said.

## Deal struck with Shas, Arab parties to ensure easy budget passage

EVELYN GORDON

THE government yesterday reached budget deals with the Arab parties and Shas, as the 1996 budget debate dragged through its third day.

Shas has agreed to abstain on the budget vote in exchange for about NIS 30 million for its institutions, while the Arab parties promised the same in exchange for a reduction of property tax on inherited land, which is estimated to cost NIS 70-100m. Since United Torah Judaism promised to abstain on Tuesday, in exchange for some NIS 6m., the government is assured of a comfortable majority for the budget.

Hadash and the Democratic Arab Party explained that they could not support the budget fully, because all their financial demands had not been met. However, the property tax reduction was a step in the right direction, they said, and they also felt obliged not to contribute to the government's fall during a crucial time in the withdrawal from Judea and Samaria and the negotiations with Syria.

The defense budget, however, is still in limbo, after the Chief of General Staff's office yesterday appealed a deal reached between the Treasury, the Defense Ministry and Knesset Finance Committee chairman Gedalya Gal (Labor).

According to the deal, which was supposed to be approved by the committee yesterday, some 50 or 60 line items in the defense budget which deal with equipment would be put into one bud-

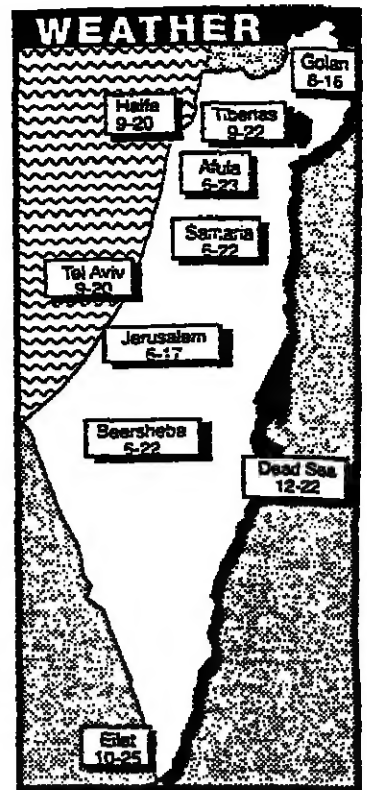
get category, with the remaining items in a separate category. Transfers from the first to the second category of more than NIS 40m. would require prior approval by the Finance Committee, while transfers within the first category of more than NIS 50m. would require committee approval. The deal is meant to ensure that money meant for equipment not be spent on salaries or the like.

Gal has refused to approve the budget without some such arrangement, since he wants more Knesset control over the defense budget. Other ministries already need committee approval for internal changes in their budgets.

The dispute could not be resolved yesterday, however, because Defense Ministry Director-General David Ivri was in Jordan. The committee therefore postponed the issue until today.

Meanwhile, weary Likud MKs who wanted permission to leave the Knesset prevailed upon their party to stop the round-the-clock voting which has forced all MKs to be present. The coalition gladly accepted a deal to defer all votes on amendments debated after 6 p.m. yesterday until 11 a.m. today. Coalition MKs said cynically that having won one vote by surprise early Tuesday morning, the Likud probably realized it would not happen again, and therefore saw no point to further round-the-clock voting.

The deal followed hours of acrimonious debate on filibustering over the budget.



Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear. Slight rise in temperatures

### AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	WIND	MOON
Amsterdam	47	59	10	cloudy
Berlin	48	62	10	cloudy
Buenos Aires	19	28	10	clear
Chicago	29	38	10	cloudy
Frankfurt	48	62	10	cloudy
Geneva	48	62	10	cloudy
Helsinki	48	62	10	cloudy
Hong Kong	12	24	10	clear
London	48	62	10	cloudy
Los Angeles	52	68	10	cloudy
Moscow	12	24	10	clear
New York	35	47	10	cloudy

### Winning cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the nine of spades, queen of hearts, eight of diamonds, and nine of clubs.

## Survey: Arabs will vote for Labor candidate for prime minister

DAVID RUDGE

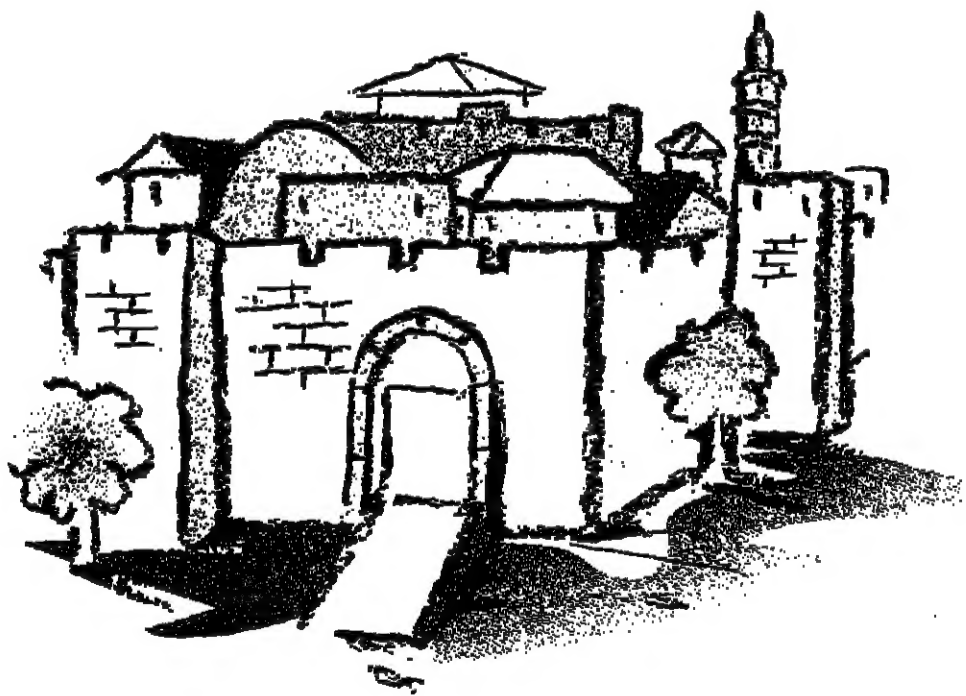
A RECENT nationwide survey shows that almost 85 percent of Arabs and Druze citizens feel the Labor-led government has done more than any other to improve the lot of Israeli Arabs. The poll also found that the Israeli Arab vote is likely to prove pivotal in deciding who will be the country's next prime minister.

The poll, conducted by Modi'in Ezerah on behalf of Tel Aviv University's Arab Politics in Israel Program, indicated that the Labor Party's candidate would get the nod from Arab voters over any other candidate.

Dr. Elie Rekhess, director of the program which was recently established in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, said the survey was conducted among 600 eligible voters representing a cross section of the Arab and Druze communities.

The findings also revealed that the vast majority of Israeli Arabs are more concerned about their own interests, as citizens of the state, rather than external Palestinian nationalist considerations.

"The poll showed that the aspiration to achieve social and economic equality with their Jewish counterparts will be the fundamental consideration of Arab voters in the next election, while the issue of Palestinian nationalism will become marginal," said Rekhess.



Tamir Cohen(jacobson)

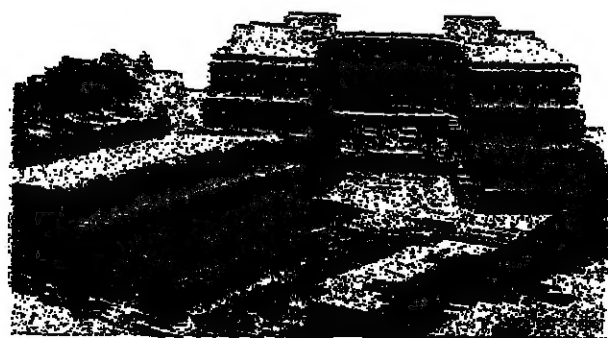
## David's Royal Residence and the Jerusalem Hilton

### - A Glorious Combination

Only a few apartments remaining!

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Tel: 02-618101 Fax: 02-660328

**Ministry of Finance**  
Accountant-General

**Civil Service Commission**  
Training Services

**Tender No. 201/95**  
**Concerning the Creation of a Data Bank of Hotels, Guest Houses and Hostels Supplying Accommodations for Training Activities**

The Civil Service Commission, the Training Services, and the Accountant-General wish to set up a data bank of hotels, guest houses and hostels (below: suppliers) to provide accommodations for training activities organized by the governmental system (government offices and related units). Only those suppliers who are included in the data bank will be allowed to provide hotel services for the training activities conducted by government offices and related units.

Any supplier able to provide the services listed on the application form may join the data bank.

A supplier included in the data bank will be required to provide the services according to the price schedule proposed by him, subject to the conditions detailed in the specifications.

Suppliers who meet the requirements for participation and who wish to join the list of candidates may receive the documents and application form to be included in the data bank from: Ms. Anat Amram, Training Services, Civil Service Commission, Prime Minister's Building, 6th Storey, Room 711, Heikiyah, Jerusalem (Tel: 02-705220).

The final date for submitting applications is Tuesday, January 30, 1996, 12:00 noon, at the box located at the above address.

The Training Services does not promise to accept all proposals offered.

**BIBLE LANDS MUSEUM JERUSALEM**

**SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT**

**"Shemesh Ensemble"**  
An evening of serenades by W.A. Mozart

Peter Shifrin, flute  
Katya Sivash, violin  
Kiril Michanovsky, cello

**December 30 at 20:30**  
**Wine and Cheese at 20:00**

Admission NIS 30, NIS 25 Museum Members, Olim, Students, Soldiers & Seniors  
Benefits The Jerusalem Post Funds

Next Concert, January 6 at 20:30  
"Washboard Wizards"  
Good time Jazz with Paul Moore, Morton Kahn, Sharon Rosener and Aharon Ben-David.

25 Granot St. Jerusalem, Tel: 02 611066

**THE COMPLETE FAMILY GUIDE TO JEWISH HOLIDAYS**  
Dalia Hardof Benberg

**The Complete Family Guide to Jewish Holidays**  
by Dalia Hardof Benberg  
Aids to help parents make the holidays more meaningful and joyful to their children, and enhance the celebration for parents and adults, by providing important and interesting background information. Each chapter explains one holiday to the child, and discusses its origins, evolution over the years, its observance, prayers and customs. The final component of each chapter covers all kinds of fun holiday activities - foods and recipes, arts and crafts, songs, etc. Black and white illustrations throughout. Hardcover, 254 pp., inc. index. JP Special: NIS 54.00

To Order: The Jerusalem Post, P.O.B. 81, Jerusalem 91000, Tel. 02-241282.  
Please send me the Complete Family Guide to Jewish Holidays.  
Enclosed is my check for: NIS 54.00 payable to The Jerusalem Post. Credit card orders accepted by phone.

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